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ABSTRACT

The Winning with Stronger Education Project (WISE) was designed to develop new ways of educating and training the multicultural population of Anchorage, Alaska. Data were obtained from several sources: a mail survey of 1,600 Anchorage residents (which procured a 62 response rate); personal interviews with 25 key Alaska business leaders; a telephone survey of 375 Anchorage businesses; focus-group sessions with Anchorage school district teachers; and qualitative research with hard-to-reach residents. Two-thirds of the residents who responded to the mailed survey said that they would be willing to spend more on education if they knew where the money was going. They said that the source of this revenue should come from reduced government spending and/or increased taxes. The qualitative research showed that hard-to-reach residents placed a high value on education; yet ethnic and racial minorities described problems due to racism and discrimination among students, teachers, administrators, and employers. Members of racial and ethnic minorities wanted accurate depictions of minorities in curricula, more Native American teachers, equal facilities, high expectations for all students, better access to education, education in basic life skills, and multicultural awareness programs. Data from the teacher-focus groups pointed to conflict between teachers and the bureaucracy. The foremost problem reported by teachers was insufficient or misallocated funding. Results of the telephone survey pointed to students' need for further job training. Appendices contain a list of research team members and methodological notes. The companion executive summary summarizes the results of each of the four research components of the WISE project: the mail-out Anchorage residential survey;the qualitative research with "hard-to-reach" residents; the Anchorage teachers' focus group research; and the telephone survey of Anchorage busnesses. Also included are a summary of the project background and an appendix listing the research team and consultants. (LMI)

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Winning With Stronger Education

ACCESS Research

- Mail-Out Anchorage Residential Survey Report
- Qualitative Research with "Hard-to-Reach" Residents
- Anchorage Teachers' Focus Group Research
- Telephone Survey of Anchorage Businesses

by

Craciun & Associates

October 21, 1991

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I. WISE Project Background

The Winning With Stronger Education (WISE) Project's advent comes at a time when the work force is changing its face and form. Employers must look increasingly at women and minorities as the work force of the future.

> "Not long ago, the term 'work force' conjured up images of white men in ties or blue collars. Today employers must increasingly look to women and minorities. Between now and the year 2000, blacks and Hispanics will account for 50% of all labor-force growth."[1]

> "Between 1989 and 2000, twenty-five million people will join the work force. Approximately 85% of those new workers will be minorities: American-born women as well as black, Hispanic, Asian, American Indian and Pacific Islander men. The remaining 15% will be white males."[2]

The public school system, from preschool to post-secondary, must now look to new ways of teaching this generation of multicultural students. In September of 1991, a first-ever forecast of the ethnic makeup of public schools predicted that one-third of U.S. students will be from minorities by 1995. The report, "The Road to College: Educational Progress by Race and Ethnicity," noted that non-white and Hispanic student populations already make up a majority in three states, and by 1994 two more will join the group.

When considering the high incidence of short-term and temporary residence and the boom/bust economic cycling in Anchorage, it is easy to understand that there is a great and growing diversity of educational needs. "In 1987-88, a total of 2,283 students were enrolled in the [Anchorage School District Bilingual] program that accommodated sixty-seven languages."[3]

Alaska Natives come from many diverse cultures, speaking many different languages but, when lumped together, are the single largest minority population in Anchorage,[4] with the lowest family income[5] and lowest employment rates.[6]

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[1] Sylvia Ann Hewlett, "The Boundaries of Business: The Human Resource Deficit." Harvard Business Review, (July-August, 1991).

[2] Alaska Pacific Consultants, Anchorage, Alaska, (907) 258-7002.

[3] Anchorage School District, Citizens For Quality Education, Draft Report on Equal Education

[4] Municipality of Anchorage, 1989 Anchorage Population and Housing Profile (February 1989), Insert.

[5] Susan Fison, Municipality of Anchorage, personal communication, October 1, 1991.

[6] Municipality of Anchorage, 1988 Anchorage Population and Housing Profile (December 1988), Table 6-4.

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Among Anchorage School District students, 26% are ethnic minorities, including Alaska Natives, African Americans, Asians, and Hispanics.[7] Alaska Natives, 9.3% of the Anchorage School District student body,[8] earn more failing grades in basic courses[9] and drop out of school[10] more than students of any other cultural background.

The Asian and Pacific Islander population is the fastest growing ethnic population in Anchorage, increasing from 3.1% of the total population in 1984, to 5.0% in 1989.[11] Fifty-two percent of the students enrolled in the Anchorage School District's Bilingual Program (1990 - 1991) were of Asian / Pacific Islander ethnicity.[12] This group's involvement in bilingual education is extremely significant because they accounted for for only 5.7% of the district's total enrollment.[13]

However, Asian/Pacific Islander teachers were underrepresented (given student percentages) in both the Bilingual Programs (42%)[14] and for the district as a whole (2.5%).[15] Despite this underrepresentation, Asian/Pacific Islander students had the lowest dropout rate (2.03%) of any ethnic group -- including whites -- for the 1989 - 1990 school year;[16] and they were failing courses at the lowest rate (7%) in the 1990 - 1991 school year.[17]

Although the Hispanic population in Alaska is only 3.2% (compared to 9% nationally), it has increased 87% over the last ten years, a percentage that is representative of the dramatic increase in the number of minority persons in Alaska (47%) during the same ten-year period.[18]

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[7] Anchorage School District, Citizens For Quality Education, op. cit., p. II-A-15.

[8] Ibid. p. II-A-15.

[9] Peter Blumberg, "Natives, Blacks Recording Most Failing Grades," Anchorage Daily News, (August 3, 1991), p. B1.

[10] Anchorage School District, Citizens For Quality Education, op. cit., Table 40.

[11] Municipality of Anchorage, op. cit., 1989.

[12] Anchorage School District, Citizens For Quality Education, op. cit., p. II-A-9.

[13] Ibid. p. II-A-15.

[14] Ibid. p. II-A-9.

[15] Ibid. p. II-A-15.

[16] Ibid. Table 40.

[17] Blumberg, p. B1.

[18] Alaska Department of Labor, Alaska Population Overview, 1990 Census & Estimates (July 1991), p. 27.

Hispanic students represent 3.2% of the total Anchorage student population,[19] while only 2% of Anchorage School District teachers are Hispanic.[20] Although the actual Hispanic population of students and teachers is the smallest in the district, the ratio of Hispanic teachers to students is the third highest of all the populations reported, preceded by white and African American populations respectively.[21] However, the percentage of Hispanic student drop-outs has been second only to the Alaska Native drop out rate for three out of the last four years.[22]

One in twelve (8.1%)[23] students enrolled in the Anchorage School District is African American. The 1990 Census reports that African Americans now constitute 6.4% of Anchorage's population,[24] rivaling Alaska Natives as the largest minority group in the Municipality of Anchorage.

Important to note, the four largest minorities in the Anchorage School District's student population are also underrepresented at the University of Alaska, Anchorage. Opening enrollment figures for the fall semester, 1991 showed 4.9% African Americans, 4.5% Alaska Natives, 3.6% Asians and Pacific Islanders, and 2.7% Hispanics.[25] Since educational attainment is a yardstick for predicting socioeconomic mobility, these statistics are alarming.

The Anchorage community must now look to new and innovative ways of educating and training our multicultural population -- today's and, increasingly, tomorrow's work force. While there are strong pressures to assimilate diverse populations, there are equally strong diverging opinions about how best to do so. Building bridges between cultures requires the ability to change, to integrate discoveries. We are confronted with reality -- the whole is only as good as the sum of its parts. The Anchorage community -- educators, business leaders and private citizens -- must grapple with change now.

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[19] Anchorage School District, Citizens For Quality Education, op. cit., p. II-A-15.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid. Table 40.

[23] Ibid. p. II-B-9.

[24] Ibid. p. II-A-15.

[25] University of Alaska, Anchorage, "Fall 1991 Opening Report," issued October 11, 1991.

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II. Study Purpose

On January 8, 1991, Jean Craciun, President, and Gale Smoke, Senior Research Analyst of Craciun & Associates, along with Dr. Jeanne Campbell, a national Education Consultant, met with Robert Gottstein, Chairperson of the Excellence in Education Committee of the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce. Dr. Thomas O'Rourke, Superintendent of Anchorage Schools, had challenged the Chamber of Commerce to lead a community-wide discussion on priorities for education.

To provide the Anchorage community with an in-depth understanding of the educational and job training needs of the entire Anchorage community -- from residents of all income levels and educational backgrounds, as well as ethnic and racial identities -- Craciun and Associates has conducted primary research for the WISE Project since January 1991. The objective of this multiphase research project was to provide a series of research tools designed to gain a deeper understanding of Anchorage residents' views on education.

The ACCESS Research Project included the following phases:

- a comprehensive mail-out survey sent to a random sample of 1600 Municipality of Anchorage residents;
- qualitative research with "hard-to-reach" Anchorage residents;
- personal interviews by Jean Craciun with 25 key Alaska business leaders;[26]
- focus group sessions with Anchorage School District teachers; and
- a telephone survey of 375 randomly selected Anchorage businesses.

[26] Findings from this phase are not contained in this report.

Mail-out Anchorage Residential Survey[27]

Executive Summary

The ACCESS mail-out survey to residents is the first in a series of research tools designed to give the Anchorage community a deeper understanding of education. We now have the opinions and attitudes of roughly 80% of Anchorage residents.

This mail-out was not designed to exclude any population segment. However, from field experience with mail-out surveys, we knew that roughly 20% of the residents would fall into a "harder-to-reach" category. Therefore, we will conduct personal interviews in the homes, a more informal technique to ensure that all Anchorage residents are represented in our final results to the community.

In March and April of 1991, 1600 Anchorage residents were sent the ACCESS mail-out survey. Nine hundred forty-eight surveys (N=948) were completed and returned, a 62% response rate.

This wealth of data yielded some interesting findings about residents' opinions on education and their role in it. It must be noted that mail-out surveys tend to be "self-selecting;" that is, respondents are usually more literate and of higher socioeconomic status than average.

In general, residents felt positive about education in Anchorage, with some caveats:

- Sixty-three percent believed there was too little discipline in the schools.
- By a margin of two to one, residents thought that teachers were not overpaid.
- And 98% felt that self-esteem was essential to a child's educational success.

How will Anchorage pay for better education? A resounding two-thirds of the residents said they would be willing to spend more on public schools if they knew where the money was going. As common sense would tell us, the more education people have, the more they would be willing to increase funding.

The source of this revenue should come from reduced government spending and/or increased taxes, according to Anchorage residents. Even though there was no consensus on what kind of tax should be imposed, one-fifth actually supported imposing a state income tax for education.

Responses on school curriculum questions are especially intriguing. There was no clear-cut preference for "basic" or "optional" schooling; most wanted the best of both. And, when queried about which of nineteen skills should be taught at home and which at school, an overwhelming majority thought school and home shared this responsibility fifty-fifty. Such a response points out the need for increased communication between educators and parents. An exception to agreement was noticed, however. Over 70% of the respondents thought "good manners" and "honesty and integrity" were the province of the home and that school should be mainly responsible for the "three R's" and the use of computers. In an interesting side note, most respondents were supportive of teaching a foreign language before grade three.

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[27] Please see Appendix B, page 182 for a discussion of the Research Objectives, Survey Sample and Methodology for the Mail-out Anchorage Residential Survey.

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To make sure that they get what they pay for, residents strongly favored the periodic testing of teachers and schools for quality; fewer supported testing children.

With the increased funding, most residents (79%) want to see class size reduced. Families with young children favor adding preschool to the public program, while those with single parents and young children want day care available at school before and after classes. However, the survey showed that most K through seventh grade students have someone waiting for them when they get home from school.

Most people in our study, many of whom are not parents, were actively engaged in interaction with children. In the previous three months the majority of respondents (or their partners) had played with a child (79%), sat down to answer a child's question (72%), read to a child (67%), engaged in sports activities with a child (59%), taken a child to a movie, concert, or play (55%), attended a school play, game, or party (52%), or attended or held a birthday party for a child (51%).

Most parents (80%) want their children to attend college immediately after high school. It is interesting to note that female respondents were more likely to have college aspirations for their female children than for their male children.

Mail-out surveys tend to be completed by the female in a mixed household unless directions specify otherwise. This survey canvassed households, not individuals. The sex of the respondent not being a variable, more respondents were female than male.

Since households received the survey during spring break, answers to such items as "the number of meals eaten together as a family" and "hours spent watching television" may be skewed.

Certain questions elicit what are thought to be socially desirable responses, the "expected" answer. Questions from our study on the following topics fall into this category:

* television viewing,
* reporting academic grades,
* frequency of parent/teacher contact, and
* parents' plans to work for credentials.

Findings

The following pages contain the research findings in the order in which questions were asked on the survey. Included in the presentation of each set of responses is a summary of any significant findings, followed by relevant frequency tables. Frequency tables list categories of response by the actual number of responses and include the percentage of the total in each category. Some frequency tables are combined to describe two pieces of data that are related in some way. This type of analysis is called crosstabulation.

Most often, crosstabulations were employed to understand the respondents' opinions, perceptions and experiences within the context of gender, age, marital status, income, etc..

Certain aspects of the sample allowed us to group people into clusters based on similarities in demographic information. An analysis was performed to provide groups in which parents could be differentiated from nonparents, single parents from paired parents or young parents from older parents. We have clustered people by a variable which we have called "Family Make-up" to obtain a richer, more descriptive understanding of the household for analysis.

The Family Make-up demographic variable was made by determining the age of the respondent and whether or not the respondent had a spouse or partner, and whether or not there were children in the household.

Table A: Family Make-up

	Count	Percent
Family makeup:		
single parents	63	6.7%
paired parents	487	51.7%
single younger non-parents	52	5.5%
paired younger non-parents	92	9.8%
single older non-parents	63	6.7%
paired older non-parents	185	19.6%
TOTAL	942	100.0%

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Table B: Demographic Information About the Family Make-up Variable

	Family makeup:					
	Single parents	Paired parents	Single younger non-parents	Paired younger non-parents	Single older non-parents	Paired older non-parents
Average age	43.9 yrs	40.8 yrs	33.9 yrs	35.7 yrs	57.5 yrs	58.5 yrs
Average education	15.0 yrs	15.2 yrs	15.9 yrs	16.1 yrs	15.0 yrs	14.6 yrs
Median income	$39,009	$62,857	$39,301	$64,561	$35,225	$61,847
Percent female	65.1%	66.3%	51.9%	66.3%	55.6%	51.9%
Percent male	34.9%	33.7%	48.1%	33.7%	44.4%	48.1%

Note: The "single parents" category incluces parents of children in college and of children who do not live with them. The demographic information for single parents with children under 17 in the household are as follows:
Average age 42.3, average education 14.6 years, average income $33,307 and percent female 75.8%

A cluster analysis was performed to group respondents according to similarities in both income and years of formal education.

Table C: Socioeconomic Status

	Count	Percent
Low education, low income	80	8.8%
Low education, average income	209	23.1%
Average education, average income	147	16.2%
High education, low income	147	16.2%
High education, high income	323	35.7%
TOTAL	906	100.0%

Table D: Demographic Information About The Socioeconomic Variable

	Sociceconomic status:				
	Low education Low income	Low education Average income	Average education Average income	High education Low income	High education High income
Average age.....	44.0 yrs	44.7 yrs	43.8 yrs	43.3 yrs	45.3 yrs
Average education....	12.7 yrs	12.9 yrs	13.8 yrs	16.6 yrs	17.4 yrs
Median income.....	$19,817	$55,394	$59,151	$36,395	over $71,000
Percent female.....	67.5%	69.9%	63.3%	61.2%	54.2%
Percent male.....	32.5%	30.1%	36.7%	38.8%	45.8%

Except where specifically noted, only findings and tables that are statistically significant are included in this report. All percentages in the narrative are rounded to the nearest whole percentage point.

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Question 1

In general, considering your personal experience with schools, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

1. **Most of my teachers in school were concerned about my future.**
2. **I was very active in school functions and activities when I was growing up.**
3. **In general, my teachers were well-qualified to teach.**
4. **Most of what I learned in school has been useful in my life.**

In general, Anchorage residents are quite positive about their own educational experience. Two-thirds or more reported that their teachers were concerned and well-qualified, that they themselves were very active in school, and that what they learned in school has been useful in life.

Table 1: Personal Experience with Schools

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Unsure
Most of what I learned in school has been useful in my life	738 78.9%	98 10.5%	92 9.8%	7 .7%
In general, my teachers were well qualified to teach	725 77.5%	127 13.6%	57 6.1%	26 2.8%
Most of my teachers in school were concerned about my future	664 71.0%	113 12.1%	133 14.2%	25 2.7%
I was very active in school functions & activities when I when I was growing up	634 67.8%	139 14.9%	157 16.8%	5 .5%

Percentages are of each row and categories have been compressed for clarity.

Question 2

Now we'd like to learn your opinions and attitudes regarding schools and education today, in Anchorage. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

1. **Self-esteem, a child's confidence in himself or herself, is very important to future success.**
2. **Each child's work should be praised as it compares to the child's capability, rather than to the class average.**
3. **Public school teachers are generally overpaid.**
4. **Public schools tend to offer a higher quality of education than private schools.**
5. **There is too little discipline in today's schools.**
6. **Teachers should make time to find something to praise in each child's work, in order to build the child's self-esteem.**
7. **If the people put up enough of a fuss, public schools will change to meet their demands.**

Twice as many Anchorage residents think that teachers are not overpaid than think they are overpaid.

Sixty-three percent of the sample believe there is too little discipline in the schools.

Most respondents do think public schools are responsive to their demands. An unusually high number of people were unsure about whether or not "public schools tend to offer a higher quality of education than private schools." Of those who expressed a clear opinion on the statement, 50% disagreed with it and only 14% agreed.

> Note: From additional comments written by respondents, we can see that some may have overlooked the reference to "education in Anchorage" and answered for schools in general or those outside Alaska.

Ninety-eight percent feel that self-esteem is critical to a child's future success. There is also strong agreement that children's work should be praised according to their capability (90%) and that teachers should find something to praise in each child's work (90%).

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Table 2-1: Attitude Toward Schools and Education in Anchorage Today

	Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Unsure	
Self-esteem, a child's confidence in self, is very important for future success.....	929	98.4%	5	.5%	9	1.0%	1	.1%
Each child's work should be praised as it compares to his or her capacity, rather than to the class average.....	852	90.3%	36	3.8%	49	5.2%	7	.7%
Teachers should make time to find something to praise in each child's work in order to build the child's self-esteem.....	849	89.9%	53	5.6%	34	3.6%	8	.8%
If the people put up enough fuss, public schools will change to meet their demands...	651	69.0%	93	9.9%	157	16.6%	43	4.6%
There is too little discipline in today's schools.....	591	62.6%	155	16.4%	146	15.5%	52	5.5%
Public school teachers are generally overpaid	231	24.5%	213	22.6%	451	47.8%	49	5.2%
Public schools tend to offer a higher quality of education than private school.....	130	13.8%	216	22.9%	470	49.8%	128	13.6%

Percentages are of each row and categories have been compressed for clarity.

The issue of discipline in the schools is significantly related to the respondent's age, family make-up and gender. The older the respondents, the more likely they are to believe discipline in today's schools is insufficient.

Table 2-2: Crosstabulation of Too Little Discipline in Schools by Age

	Respondent's age:					TOTAL
	18 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 and older	
Too little discipline:						
agree	82 55.8%	198 62.1%	162 69.5%	75 76.5%	54 83.1%	571 66.2%
neutral	39 26.5%	58 18.2%	38 16.3%	9 9.2%	7 10.8%	151 17.5%
disagree	26 17.7%	63 19.7%	33 14.2%	14 14.3%	4 6.2%	140 16.2%
TOTAL	147 100%	319 100%	233 100%	98 100%	65 100%	862 100%

Column percentages

Those households without children in school are more likely to think discipline is lax, while one-third of single parents are neutral about the role discipline plays in school.

Table 2-3: Crosstabulation of Too Little Discipline in School by Family Make-up

	Family makeup:						TOTAL
	Single parents	Paired parents	Single younger non-parents	Paired younger non-parents	Single older non-parents	Paired older non-parents	
Too little discipline:							
agree	31 50.0%	280 60.9%	32 64.0%	56 70.0%	44 75.9%	142 80.7%	585 66.0%
neutral	19 30.6%	90 19.6%	11 22.0%	13 16.3%	9 15.5%	13 7.4%	155 17.5%
disagree	12 19.4%	90 19.6%	7 14.0%	11 13.8%	5 8.6%	21 11.9%	146 16.5%
TOTAL	62 100%	460 100%	50 100%	80 100%	58 100%	176 100%	886 100%

Column percentages

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Question 3A

Did you ever experience discrimination in school from a teacher?

Question 3B

If so, please check all of the types of discrimination you experienced.

1. **Racial**
2. **Sex**
3. **Age**
4. **Because of a physical handicap**
5. **Because the teacher didn't like you**
6. **Comparison to a brother or sister**

Over a third (37%) of respondents indicated they personally experienced discrimination in school from a teacher.

Of the 351 surveyed who did experience discrimination, half (50%) said the reason was that the teacher did not like them, while a third contended that the reason was their gender. Twenty-seven percent claimed the discrimination was based on comparison to a sibling.

Table 3: Discrimination Experienced by the Respondent from a Teacher

	Number of Yes Replies	Percent of Respondents
Respondent:		
Experienced no discrimination	597	61.9%
Experienced discrimination	351	37.0%
No answer	10	1.1%
Total Respondents	948	100.0%
Types of discrimination:		
the teacher didn't like me	176	50.1%
sex	113	32.2%
comparison with a brother or sister	95	27.1%
alienness *	46	13.1%
racial	44	12.5%
age	23	6.6%
academic difficulty *	17	4.8%
physical handicap	14	4.0%
athletic problems *	9	2.6%
Miscellaneous *	4	1.1%
no answer	4	1.1%
Total Respondents	351	

* Other kinds of discrimination volunteered:

Alienness, included:
- 13 poverty
- 7 social status
- 7 appearance
- 7 religion
- 3 came from a village/ another part of the country
- 3 nationality
- 2 parents were divorced
- 2 too quick to learn
- 1 language style
- 1 was in ROTC

Academic difficulty, included:
- 10 learning problems, slowness
- 5 not a top student
- 2 track system

Atheletic problems, included:
- 7 wasn't an athlete
- 2 was an athlete

Miscellaneous, included:
- 1 lefthanded
- 1 comparison to father
- 1 academic major
- 1 classes taken outside of major

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Question 4A

In the next ten years, would you like to obtain any of the following educational credentials? Please check all that apply.

1. **High School Diploma/GED**
2. **Vocational Certificate [Business College, Travel School, Bartending School, Carpentry...]**
3. **Associate Degree**
4. **Bachelor's Degree**
5. **Graduate Degree**
6. **Professional Certificate [nurse, teacher, electronic technician...]**
7. **Professional License [doctor, teacher, lawyer, pilot, real estate...]**
8. **What I want is not available (specify)**

Question 4B

If you checked any of the above choices, please indicate which of the following it might affect. Please check all that apply.

1. **Increase my income**
2. **Help me get promoted**
3. **Allow me more personal freedom**
4. **Provide me with a more meaningful life**
5. **Help me keep my job**

The earning of a credential of some kind within the next ten years is important to more than three of five respondents (62%). Desired most are a graduate degree (22%), a bachelor's degree (20%), a professional license (11%), or a professional certificate (10%).

People living in Anchorage say that the most important incentive for earning a credential is "to provide me with a more meaningful life" (66%). A significant number of people just want to increase their income (62%).

Table 4: Education Aspirations for Next Ten Years and Perceived Payoff

	Number of Yes Replies	Percent of Respondents
Credentials desired:		
Graduate Degree	205	21.8%
Bachelor's Degree	188	20.0%
Professional License	101	10.7%
Professional Certificate	95	10.1%
Associate Degree	84	8.9%
Vocational certificate	63	6.7%
High School diploma or GED	18	1.9%
What I want is not available here	44	4.7%
No aspirations	357	37.9%
Total Respondents	941	
Expected effect of additional education:		
a more meaningful life/ personal satisfaction	386	66.1%
increase income/ job opportunity/ career change	361	61.8%
more personal freedom	215	36.8%
promotion	157	26.9%
keep job/ improve job skills	42	7.2%
other *	21	3.6%
Total Respondents	584	

* Other answers, including:

8 Allow me to help others
1 To offer better direction for my children
1 To be taken seriously

2 To start my own business
1 To let me work around animals
1 To provide security to the boss
1 To be able to transfer with my husband

6 No answer

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Question 5

Please check which of the following services you or any member of your household used during the past three years. Please check all that apply.

01. **Family counseling**
02. **Car pool**
03. **Public transit**
04. **Library**
05. **AWAIC Shelter/Male Awareness Program/STAR**
06. **Employer-sponsored childcare**
07. **OJT Services (On-the-job training)**
08. **Alcohol or drug treatment clinic**
09. **Alcohol or drug treatment support group**
10. **Apprenticeship programs offered by unions**
11. **Unemployment insurance**
12. **Worker's compensation**
13. **Youth organizations such as Boys' or Girls' Club**
14. **Community schools**
15. **Self-help group, such as Single Parents, Weight Watchers**
16. **Called the police**
17. **Called the fire department**
18. **School psychologist**
19. **Other**

Residents of Anchorage utilized the library more than any other service listed; six of every seven respondents used it (87%).

Another three services were used by at-least 30% of Anchorage households: community schools (42%), the police (35%), and public transit (31%).

Finally, at least 15% of the households relied on support services such as youth organizations (19%), family counseling (17%), unemployment insurance (16%), and self-help groups (15%).

Table 5-1: Services Used by Any Member of Household

	Number of Yes Replies	Percent of Respondents
Services:		
a library	816	86.5%
community schools *	398	42.2%
youth organizations such as Boy's or Girl's club.	182	19.3%
public transit	290	30.8%
car pool	88	9.3%
family counseling	162	17.2%
self-help group (Single Parents, Weight watchers)	144	15.3%
school psychologist	79	8.4%
alcohol or drug treatment support group	33	3.5%
alcohol or drug treatment clinic	16	1.7%
AWAIC shelter/ Male Awareness Program/ STAR	18	1.9%
unemployment insurance	147	15.6%
worker's compensation	74	7.8%
OJT services	83	8.8%
apprenticeship programs offered by unions	20	2.1%
employer sponsored childcare	15	1.6%
called the police	333	35.3%
called the fire department	72	7.6%
other #	41	4.3%
None of the above	37	3.9%
Total Respondents	943	

* Many respondents seemed to confuse community schools with public schools.
# Other answers included the Senior Center, paramedics, school playgrounds, and many others.

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Households cluster into three groups: a mainstream group and two small "different" groups. The smaller of the "different" groups--group one (with forty-seven members) is most likely to take advantage of family counseling. Demographically, the respondent in the household is younger and more likely to be a parent.

The other "different" group--group two (ninety-three members) is more likely than the other groups to have needed worker's compensation or unemployment insurance, to use youth organizations and to ride the bus. Their ages lie between those in group one and the mainstream group. They are more likely to be parents than the mainstream group and are more likely to be paired with a partner or spouse.

Table 5-2: Service User Groups as Defined by Services Used

	Service user groups:			Total "Agree" Responses
	Group 1	Group 2	Main group	
Services:				
family counseling	48.9%	16.1%	16.2%	17.9%
AWAIC shelter/ Male Awareness Program/ STAR	36.2%		.1%	2.0%
alcohol or drug treatment support group	36.2%		2.1%	3.7%
alcohol or drug treatment clinic	34.0%			1.8%
employer sponsored childcare	29.8%	1.1%		1.7%
OJT services	17.0%	5.4%	9.2%	9.2%
called the fire department	17.0%	6.5%	7.5%	7.9%
self-help group (Single Parents, Weight watchers)	27.7%	24.7%	14.1%	15.9%
called the police	51.1%	46.2%	34.7%	36.7%
school psychologist	17.0%	20.4%	6.7%	8.6%
community schools *	51.1%	55.9%	42.0%	43.9%
worker's compensation	14.9%	67.7%	.5%	8.2%
unemployment insurance	19.1%	51.6%	11.8%	16.3%
apprenticeship programs offered by unions	2.1%	5.4%	1.8%	2.2%
Public transit	42.6%	51.6%	29.1%	32.1%
car pool	10.6%	19.4%	8.5%	9.7%
youth organizations such as Boy's or Girl's club.	25.5%	41.9%	17.0%	20.0%
a library	85.1%	87.1%	91.0%	90.3%
other	4.3%	3.2%	4.7%	4.5%
Total respondents	47	93	764	904

Table 5-3: Demographic Details of the Service User Groups

	Service user groups:		
	Group 1	Group 2	Main group
Respondent's demographics:			
Mean age	40.0 yrs	42.8 yrs	45.1 yrs
Mean education	15.3 yrs	15.1 yrs	15.2 yrs
Median income	$57,455	$56,377	$58,494
Percent who are parents	76.6%	68.5%	56.4%
Percent single parents	14.9%	3.3%	6.7%
Percent who are paired	80.9%	87.1%	80.0%
Percent female	63.8%	72.0%	60.9%
Number in each group	47	93	764

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In-depth analysis of those people that use the services most revealed that users are generally well-off in the community, not needy. Rather than identifying dysfunctional families, we found self-reliant, resourceful families rely on support services most.

Table 5-4: Crosstabulation of Where Does The Responsibility Lie (See Question 14) by Service User Groups

	Service user groups:			Total "Agree" Responses
	Group 1	Group 2	Main group	
Home has the responsibility for:				
use of technology such as computers		2.6%	1.0%	1.1%
math computation		3.9%	1.0%	1.3%
writing		1.3%	1.9%	1.8%
reading		9.2%	5.1%	5.2%
problem solving	15.4%	13.2%	11.3%	11.7%
applying knowledge to new situations	12.8%	22.4%	10.4%	11.7%
knowing how to learn	7.7%	21.1%	13.0%	13.5%
how to work with others	30.8%	13.2%	16.1%	16.6%
being accurate	28.2%	15.8%	16.6%	17.1%
keeping at it, working quickly	25.6%	17.1%	19.4%	19.5%
how to look for work	46.2%	21.1%	20.0%	21.4%
getting work done on time	35.9%	25.0%	25.5%	26.0%
speaking	38.5%	27.6%	31.6%	31.6%
listening	46.2%	34.2%	31.9%	32.9%
self-esteem	38.5%	39.5%	40.3%	40.1%
willingness to accept advice & criticism	53.8%	44.7%	42.4%	43.2%
showing up on time	69.2%	39.5%	51.0%	50.8%
honesty & integrity	82.1%	86.8%	84.0%	84.2%
good manners	89.7%	90.8%	87.3%	87.8%
Total respondents	39	76	670	785

Library Usage

Households in which someone has used a library within the last three years differed from households in which no one had, in the following ways:

- there were more likely to be children in the household (62% compared to 34%),
- the respondent or his or her partner were more likely to be continuing their education (24% compared to 6%),
- the respondent was younger (mean age forty-four compared to forty-nine), and
- better educated (mean years of education 15.4 compared to 13.9).

Question 6

During the last three months have you or your spouse/partner done any of the following things with a child? Please check all that you have done.

01. **Took a child to a sporting event**
02. **Read to a child**
03. **Attended a school play, game, party, carnival, etc...**
04. **Played with a child**
05. **Attended religious services with a child**
06. **Took a child to a movie, concert, play or similar performance**
07. **Took a child to a museum, zoo or the Imaginarium**
08. **Engaged in active sports such as walking jogging, sledding, skiing, fishing, etc... with a child**
09. **Attended or held a birthday party for a child**
10. **Took a child to the library**
11. **Talked to your child's teacher**
12. **Went to a PTA or "parent group" meeting**
13. **Taught a child a game, music, art, or science**
14. **Sat down to answer a child's question**
15. **Helped out in classroom or served on a school committee**

Regarding direct involvement with the school system, 43% of the residents claimed to have talked to their children's teachers in the previous three months,[28] and 25% had helped out in a classroom or served on a school committee. However, only 20% had attended a P.T.A. or other parent group meeting.

Most people in our study, many of whom are not parents, were actively engaged in interaction with a child. In the previous three months the majority of respondents (or their partners) had played with a child (79%), sat down to answer a child's question (72%), read to a child (67%), engaged in sports activities with a child (59%), taken a child to a movie, concert, or play (55%), attended a school play, game, or party (52%), or attended or held a birthday party for a child (51%).

Fifteen activities were listed. Only 12% of those surveyed (or their partners) had had no experience of activities with children during the previous three months.

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[28] May be skewed because parent-teacher conferences had recently occurred.

Table 6-1: Activities with Children in Last Three Months -- Respondent or Partner

	Number of Yes Replies	Percent of Respondents
Activities:		
played with a child	735	78.5%
sat down to answer a child's question	670	71.6%
read to a child	628	67.1%
engaged in active sports, walk or run with a child	548	58.5%
attended or held a birthday party for a child	477	51.0%
taught a child a game, music, art or science	458	48.9%
attended a religious service with a child	364	38.9%
took a child to a movie, concert, play	513	54.8%
took a child to a sporting event	389	41.6%
took a child to the library	382	40.8%
took a child to a museum, zoo, or Imaginarium	305	32.6%
attended a school play, game, party	488	52.1%
talked to your child's teacher	406	43.4%
helped out in classroom or served on a school committee	234	25.0%
went to a PTA or "parent group" meeting	188	20.1%
none of the above	110	11.8%
Total Respondents	936	

Question 6 (Cont'd)

The likelihood of engaging in activities with a child is very much influenced by the number of parents in the household and whether or not they are in the work force. Single working parents are less likely than paired working parents or nonworking parents to have time for the activities listed.

In general, single parents report doing the same kinds of activities as paired parents but less frequently; they spend less time engaged in activities which are directly related to school.

Table 6-2: Crosstabulation of Activities with Children in Last Three Months by Working Parents

	Working parents:				Total "Agree" Responses
	Single working parent:	Paired working parent:	Non-working parent:	Non-parent:	
Activities:					
played with a child	85.1%	89.0%	92.5%	63.3%	78.5%
sat down to answer a child's question	85.1%	88.7%	87.7%	48.2%	71.6%
read to a child	68.1%	80.0%	84.9%	49.0%	67.1%
engaged in active sports with a child	76.6%	77.2%	74.5%	33.1%	58.6%
attended or held a birthday party held for a child	46.8%	64.6%	70.8%	32.6%	51.1%
taught a child a game, music, art or science	55.3%	62.8%	70.8%	27.9%	48.9%
attended a religious service with a child	48.9%	51.5%	56.6%	19.5%	38.7%
took a child to a movie, concert, play	72.3%	75.9%	74.5%	25.5%	54.7%
took a child to a sporting event	63.8%	57.2%	56.6%	18.2%	41.3%
took a child to the library	51.1%	65.1%	65.1%	8.3%	40.9%
took a child to a museum, zoo, or Imaginarium	38.3%	42.1%	57.5%	15.9%	32.8%
attended a school play, game, party	70.2%	70.5%	68.9%	26.3%	52.0%
talked to your child's teacher	59.6%	71.5%	70.8%	5.5%	43.5%
helped out in classroom or served on a school committee	27.7%	37.2%	38.7%	8.3%	24.9%
went to a PTA or "parent group" meeting	23.4%	31.5%	34.0%	4.4%	20.2%
none of the above	6.4%	2.1%	2.8%	24.7%	11.8%
Total respondents	47	390	106	384	927

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Question 6 (Cont'd)

Men are not engaged in children's lives to the extent that women are involved.

Table 6-3: Crosstabulation of Activities with Chidren in Last Three Months by Gender of Respondent

	Respondent:		Total "Agree" Responses
	Female	Male	
Activities:			
played with a child	81.4%	73.7%	78.5%
sat down to answer a child's question	72.1%	70.6%	71.6%
read to a child	70.9%	60.7%	67.1%
engaged in active sports with a child	60.1%	55.9%	58.5%
attended or held a birthday party held for a child	54.7%	44.6%	50.9%
taught a child a game, music, art or science.	50.9%	45.5%	48.9%
attended a religious service with a child	41.8%	34.2%	38.9%
took a child to a movie, concert, play	56.6%	51.7%	54.8%
took a child to a sporting event	43.5%	38.1%	41.5%
took a child to the library	43.9%	35.6%	40.7%
took a child to a museum, zoo, or Imaginarium	35.6%	27.4%	32.5%
attended a school play, game, party	54.4%	48.3%	52.1%
talked to your child's teacher	46.0%	39.0%	43.3%
helped out in classroom or served on a school committee	28.4%	19.5%	25.0%
went to a PTA or "parent group" meeting	21.5%	17.5%	20.0%
none of the above	10.2%	14.4%	11.8%
Total respondents	581	354	935

Question 7

When should schools begin offering children a foreign language?

1. **Preschool or kindergarten**
2. **Grades one to three**
3. **Grades four to six**
4. **Junior high**
5. **High school**
6. **College**
7. **Never**

Nearly three of every five respondents (59%) think schools should offer training in a foreign language by the third grade.

When Should School Begin To Offer A Foreign Language?

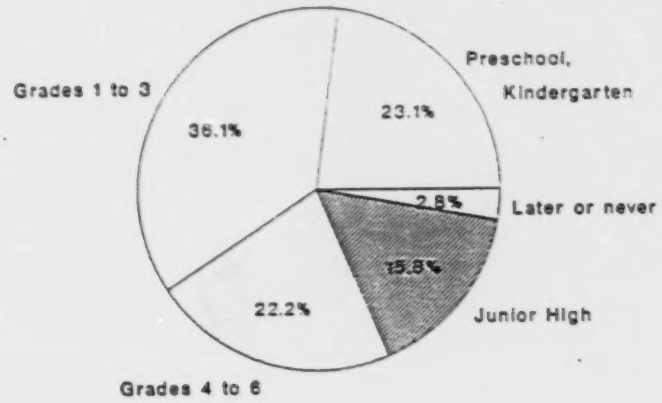

Table 7: When Should Schools Begin Offering Foreign Languages?

	Count	Percent
Grade:		
preschool or kindergarten..	216	23.1%
grades 1 to 3.....	338	36.1%
grades 4 to 6.....	208	22.2%
junior high.....	148	15.8%
high school.....	23	2.5%
college.....	1	.1%
never.....	2	.2%
TOTAL.....	936	100.0%

Percentages based on answers; 8 respondents did not answer.

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Question 8

Would you be willing to have government spend more money if it went toward increased funding of the Anchorage Public Schools?

1. **Yes**
2. **Yes, but only if I knew where the money would go**
3. **No**

Although 83% of the Anchorage public would be willing to have government spend more money on public schools, a resounding three-quarters of them (or 63% of the total) would need to know where the money was going.

Would You Be Willing To Have The Government Spend More Money For Schools?

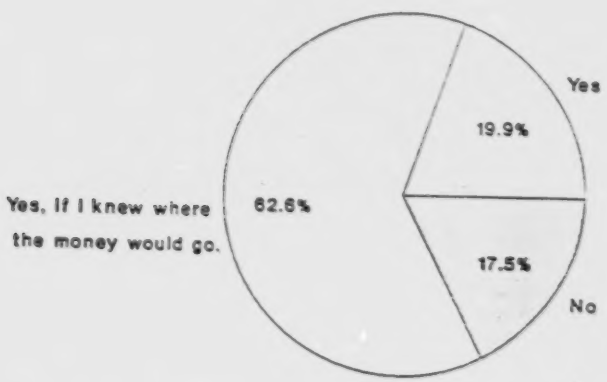

Table 8-1: Willing to Have Government Spend More on Anchorage Public Schools

	Count	Percent
Yes, willing to spend more	186	19.9%
Yes, but only if I knew for what	585	62.6%
No, unwilling to spend more	164	17.5%
TOTAL	935	100.0%

Percentages based on answers; 9 respondents did not answer.

Question 8 (Cont'd)

In general, the willingness to spend more money on education declines as the respondent's age increases.

Table 8-2: Crosstabulation Willingness to Spend More on Education by Age

	Respondent's age:					TOTAL
	18 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 and older	
Willing to spend more *....	146 90.1%	295 87.8%	189 79.1%	66 66.0%	50 72.5%	746 82.3%
Unwilling to spend more....	16 9.9%	41 12.2%	50 20.9%	34 34.0%	19 27.5%	160 17.7%
TOTAL.....	162 100%	336 100%	239 100%	100 100%	69 100%	906 100%

Column percentages

* Includes both qualified & unqualified willingness to spend.

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Question 9

If government spending for education were to be increased, where should the money come from? Please check all that apply.

1. **Reduce government spending in other areas**
2. **Increase property tax**
3. **Introduce sales tax**
4. **Introduce a state income tax earmarked for schools, including Anchorage**
5. **Reduce permanent fund dividend**
6. **Increase industry and business tax**
9. **Unsure**

If government spending for education were increased, the majority of respondents would want government spending reduced in other areas (59%). There is some support for raising taxes, but no consensus on the best way to funnel money into education. Only one in five (22%) would be willing to have his or her permanent fund dividend reduced to increase funding for education.

Table 9-1: Chosen Source of Funds If Spending Is Increased for Education

	Number of Yes Replies	Percent of Respondents
Sources of money for education:		
reduce government spending in other areas	560	59.3%
reduce permanent fund dividend	206	21.8%
increase industry & business tax	179	19.0%
introduce sales tax	163	17.3%
introduce state income tax earmarked for schools	162	17.2%
increase property tax	107	11.3%
other *	14	1.5%
unsure	132	14.0%
None of the above	35	3.7%
Total Respondents	944	

* Other answers:
- 3 spend more wisely
- 3 reduce administrative costs
- 2 cut out unnecessary clases & activities
- 1 lower government wages
- 1 probably use war surplus money
- 1 reduce permanent fund for children to 50% of parents'
- 1 form an educational permanent fund
- 1 resinstate the $10 school tax
- 1 from the students' parents

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Question 9 (Cont'd)

If educational spending were to be increased, those citizens under fifty-five would be more willing to raise taxes to fund education than those fifty-five or older. This is also true for the idea of reducing the permanent fund dividend for school funding, with senior citizens being the most wary of this approach. The exception is that both age groups support a state income tax for education about equally at 20%.

Table 9-2: Crosstabulation of Funding Source If Spending Is Increased for Education by Age

	Respondent's age:					Total "Agree" Responses
	18 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 and older	
Sources of money:						
reduce government spending in other areas	79.3%	63.5%	64.1%	66.7%	71.0%	67.3%
reduce permanent fund dividend	27.9%	30.1%	26.3%	13.8%	4.8%	25.2%
increase industry & business tax	24.3%	24.4%	19.4%	19.5%	11.3%	21.5%
introduce sales tax	20.0%	21.4%	19.4%	17.2%	12.9%	19.5%
introduce state income tax earmarked for schools	18.6%	21.4%	17.5%	19.5%	19.4%	19.5%
increase property tax	7.1%	16.4%	14.3%	10.3%	9.7%	13.2%
None of the above	.7%	2.7%	6.0%	8.0%	9.7%	4.3%
Total respondents	140	299	217	87	62	805

Interesting to note, the highest socioeconomic group is the most willing to increase taxes for school funding--with one exception. They are not excited about increasing industry and business taxes. In fact, a respondent's level of education is more closely correlated with the willingness to fund education than is his or her income.

Table 9-3: Crosstabulation of Funding Source If Spending Is Increased for Education by Socioeconomic Status

	Socioeconomic status:					Total "Agree" Responses
	Low education, low income	Low education, average income	Average education, average income	High education, low income	High education, high income	
Sources of money:						
reduce government spending in other areas	70.8%	75.3%	68.3%	69.7%	59.5%	67.2%
reduce permanent fund dividend	18.5%	19.4%	15.1%	29.5%	32.9%	25.2%
increase industry & business tax	13.8%	21.0%	20.6%	27.3%	22.5%	21.9%
introduce sales tax	12.3%	16.1%	22.2%	19.7%	23.2%	19.9%
introduce state income tax earmarked for schools	16.9%	17.2%	15.1%	22.3%	23.2%	19.8%
increase property tax	10.8%	6.5%	9.5%	10.6%	21.5%	13.4%
None of the above	6.2%	2.7%	5.6%	3.0%	4.5%	4.1%
Total respondents	65	186	126	132	289	798

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Question 10

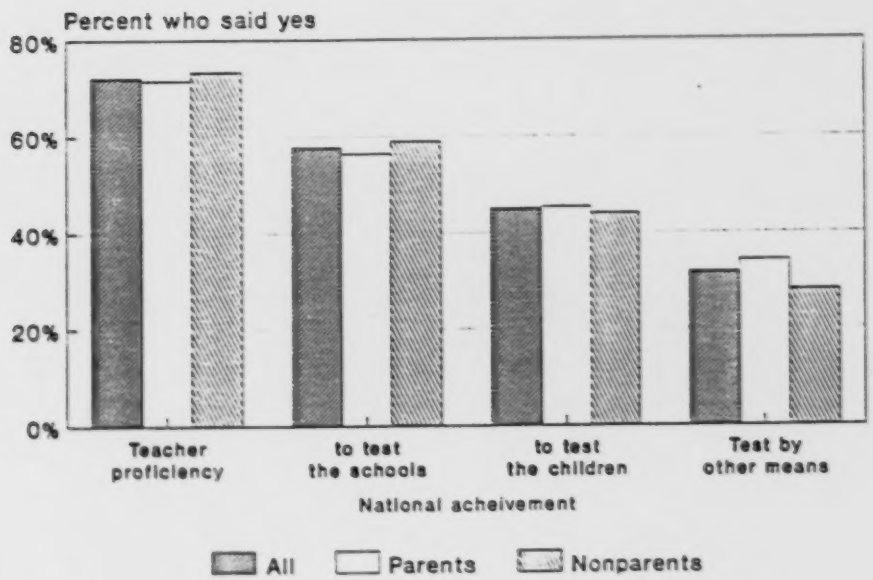
Which kind of general testing should be done in Anchorage's public schools? Please check all that apply.

1. **Children should take national achievement tests and be compared to national standards as a test of the children.**
2. **Children should be judged by means other than nationally devised multiple choice questions.**
3. **Children should take national achievement tests, and the schools' scores should be compared to national standards as a test of the school.**
4. **Teachers should be required to take periodic competency tests.**
9. **Unsure**

Most of those surveyed would like to see both teachers and schools tested regularly. Respondents showing the greatest support for testing the competency of teachers (72%) think testing should be done periodically. A majority (58%) also think that national achievement tests should be used as a test of a school.

Fewer Anchorage residents (45%) support children taking national achievement tests as a test of the children's own achievements and abilities.

Which Kinds of General Testing Should be Done in Anchorage?



Question 10 (Cont'd)

Table 10-1: Which Kinds of General Testing Should Be Done in Anchorage

	Number of Yes Replies	Percent of Respondents
Types of testing:		
Teachers should be required to take periodic competency tests	682	72.2%
Children should take national achievement tests and the schools scores compared to national standards as a test of the school	545	57.7%
Children should take national achievement tests and be compared to national standards as a of the children	425	45.0%
Children should be judged by means other than nationally devised multiple-choice questions.	299	31.7%
Unsure	59	6.3%
None of the above	6	.6%
Total Respondents	944	

While single parents are more interested in seeing their children tested, single young people with no children are more interested in seeing that schools are tested.

Table 10-2: Crosstabulation of Kinds of General Testing by Family Make-up

	Family makeup:						Total "Agree" Responses
	Single parents	Paired parents	Single younger non-parents	Paired younger non-parents	Single older non-parents	Paired older non-parents	
Types of testing:							
Teachers should be required to take periodic competency tests	71.4%	71.8%	63.5%	70.7%	74.6%	76.9%	72.3%
Children should take national achievement tests as a test of the schools	42.9%	58.2%	65.4%	55.4%	58.7%	58.8%	57.5%
Children should take national achievement tests as a test of the children	54.0%	44.7%	48.1%	42.4%	38.1%	45.6%	45.2%
Children should be judged by means other than nationally devised multiple-choice questions	25.4%	35.4%	21.2%	33.7%	30.2%	26.4%	31.7%
Unsure	4.8%	4.9%	1.9%	9.8%	14.3%	7.1%	6.3%
No answer	1.6%	.8%	1.9%				.6%
Total respondents	63	486	52	92	63	182	938

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Those age forty-five to fifty-four years of age are more in favor of the testing of children and slightly less in favor of testing teachers when compared to other age groupings.

Table 10-3: Crosstabulation of Which Kinds of General Testing by Age

	Respondent's age:					Total "Agree" Responses
	18 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 and older	
Types of testing:						
teachers should be required to take periodic competency tests	76.7%	71.0%	68.9%	75.2%	77.1%	72.4%
children should take national achievement tests as a test of the schools	55.8%	55.6%	62.7%	60.4%	55.7%	58.1%
children should take national achievement tests as a test of the children	35.6%	44.1%	51.0%	48.5%	45.7%	45.0%
children should be judged by means other than nationally devised multiple-choice questions	33.7%	33.1%	32.4%	25.7%	30.0%	32.0%
unsure	6.7%	5.6%	4.6%	9.9%	7.1%	6.1%
No answer	.6%	1.2%		1.0%		.7%
Total respondents	163	338	241	101	70	913

Question 11

Regardless of how you answered the previous question, should children be given minimum proficiency tests to show that they can do some minimum level of work before they are allowed to graduate? Please check all that apply.

1. **Yes, from sixth grade**
2. **Yes, from junior high school (or middle school)**
3. **Yes, from high school**
4. **No**

A majority support minimum proficiency tests at all of the suggested grade levels; a decisive two-thirds want testing to begin in grade six.

Should Minimum Proficiency Testing be Required in Anchorage?

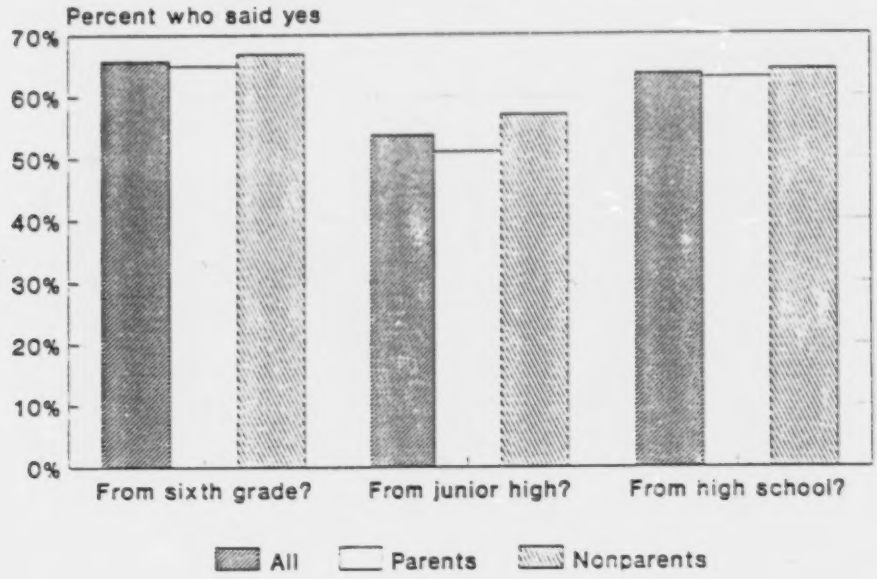

Table 11-1: Minimum Proficiency Tests Should be Required in Anchorage

	Number of Yes Replies	Percent of Respondents
Required for graduation:		
from sixth grade	620	65.8%
from junior high school or middle school	506	53.7%
from high school	599	63.6%
none of the above	67	7.1%
No answer	15	1.6%
Total Respondents	942	

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Question 11 (Cont'd)

Young people without children are more likely than other groups to support beginning minimum proficiency testing in high school.

Table 11-2: Crosstabulation of Requiring Minimum Proficiency Tests by Family Make-Up

	Family makeup by marital status:						Total "Agree" Responses
	Single parents	Paired parents	Single younger non-parents	Paired younger non-parents	Single older non-parents	Paired older non-parents	
Required for graduation:							
from sixth grade	61.9%	66.7%	64.7%	72.5%	59.7%	69.8%	67.0%
from junior high school or middle school	39.7%	53.5%	66.7%	60.4%	50.0%	57.5%	54.5%
from high school	54.0%	65.5%	76.5%	72.5%	53.2%	63.1%	64.7%
none of the above	11.1%	8.0%	5.9%	3.3%	8.1%	6.1%	7.3%
Total respondents	63	475	51	91	62	179	921

In general, the youngest (under thirty-five) and oldest (sixty-five or older) respondents are more supportive of minimum proficiency testing than the middle group.

Table 11-3: Crosstabulation of Requiring Minimum Proficiency Tests by Age

	Respondent's age:					Total "Agree" Responses
	18 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 and older	
Required for graduation:						
from sixth grade	72.3%	66.2%	62.9%	74.5%	68.1%	67.4%
from junior high school or middle school	59.1%	52.3%	52.5%	58.2%	59.4%	54.7%
from high school	69.2%	65.9%	59.6%	64.3%	65.2%	64.5%
none of the above	6.3%	7.6%	6.7%	7.1%	7.2%	7.0%
Total respondents	159	331	240	98	69	897

Question 12

Some suggestions for improving the quality of education in Anchorage would clearly cost more money because they would require more teachers and classrooms. Would you like to see any of the following changes, at least to some degree, even if it meant spending more on education? Please circle if you would favor the suggestion, oppose it, or are unsure.

1. **Reduce the size of classes, to allow for more individualized attention.**
2. **Lengthen the school day or school year, or both, to increase time for learning.**
3. **Include preschool in public schools, to give all children the same opportunities.**
4. **Provide before and after school care for children of working parents.**

Reduced class size is endorsed by 79% of the sample. Responses to the other three suggestions are mixed, with almost as much opposition as support.

Suggestions for Improving the Quality of Education in Anchorage

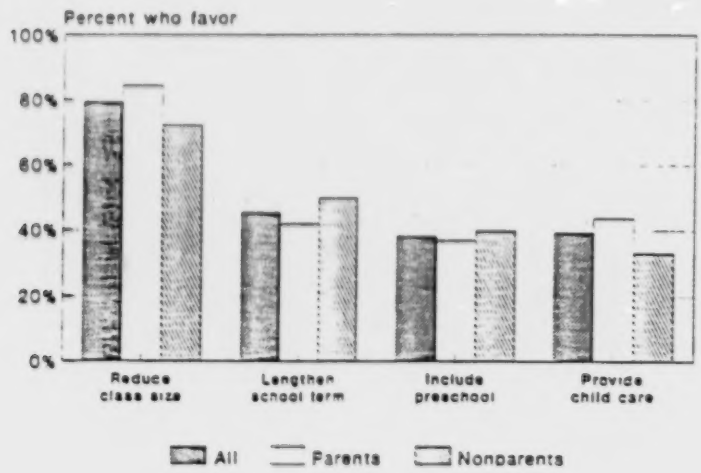

Table 12-1: Suggestions for Improving the Quality of Education in Anchorage

	Favor		Oppose		Unsure	
Reduce the size of classes, to allow for more individualized attention	749	79.3%	76	8.1%	119	12.6%
Lengthen the school day, school year or both, to increase time for learning	429	45.4%	340	36.0%	175	18.5%
Include preschool in public schools, to give all children the same opportunities	360	38.1%	364	38.6%	220	23.3%
Provide before and after school care for children of working parents	371	39.3%	343	36.3%	230	24.4%

Percentages are of each row.

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Question 12 (Cont'd)

Parents are more in favor of reducing class size than nonparents.

Table 12-2: Crosstabulation of Support for Reducing Class Size by Parenthood

	Parents		Non-parents		TOTAL	
Reduce class size:						
Favor	460	84.4%	281	72.1%	741	79.3%
Oppose	34	6.2%	41	10.5%	75	8.0%
Unsure	51	9.4%	68	17.4%	119	12.7%
TOTAL	545	100%	390	100%	935	100%

Column percentages

Support for reducing class size definitely declines with age.

Table 12-3: Crosstabulation of Support for Reducing Class Size by Age

	Respondent's age:										TOTAL	
	18 to 34		35 to 44		45 to 54		55 to 64		65 and older			
Reduce class size:												
Favor	146	89.6%	284	84.0%	185	77.1%	65	64.4%	43	60.6%	723	79.2%
Oppose	8	4.9%	21	6.2%	21	8.8%	16	15.8%	7	9.9%	73	8.0%
Unsure	9	5.5%	33	9.8%	34	14.2%	20	19.8%	21	29.6%	117	12.8%
TOTAL	163	100%	338	100%	240	100%	101	100%	71	100%	913	100%

Column percentages

Support for lengthening the school day or year is strongest among two groups--working parents and nonparents. Opposition and uncertainty about the proposition is strongest among respondents with spouses or partners, whether working or not working.

Table 12-4: Crosstabulation of Support for Lengthening the School Day and Year by Working Parents

	Working parents:								TOTAL	
	Single working parent:		Paired working parent:		Non-working parent:		Non-parent:			
Lengthen the day or year:										
Favor	28	57.1%	162	41.5%	39	36.8%	195	50.0%	424	45.3%
Oppose	17	34.7%	163	41.8%	42	39.6%	115	29.5%	337	36.0%
Unsure	4	8.2%	65	16.7%	25	23.6%	80	20.5%	174	18.6%
TOTAL	49	100%	390	100%	106	100%	390	100%	935	100%

Column percentages

Support for lengthening the school day and year also increases as the respondent's age increases, reaching a majority after age fifty-five.

Table 12-5: Crosstabulation of Support for Lengthening the School Day and Year by Age

	Respondent's age:										TOTAL	
	18 to 34		35 to 44		45 to 54		55 to 64		65 and older			
Lengthen the day or year:												
Favor	59	36.2%	148	43.8%	116	48.3%	55	54.5%	38	53.5%	416	45.6%
Oppose	73	44.8%	130	38.5%	83	34.6%	29	28.7%	14	19.7%	329	36.0%
Unsure	31	19.0%	60	17.8%	41	17.1%	17	16.8%	19	26.8%	168	18.4%
TOTAL	163	100%	338	100%	240	100%	101	100%	71	100%	913	100%

Column percentages

Respondents with the lowest socioeconomic status were most in favor of including preschool as part of the public schools. It was not clear from the findings whether they just wanted some preschool option or whether they actually preferred preschool to be part of the public school system.

Table 12-6: Crosstabulation of Support for Including Preschool in Public Schools by Socioeconomic Status

	Socioeconomic status:										TOTAL	
	Low education, low income		Low education, average income		Average education, average income		High education, low income		High education, high income			
Include preschool:												
Favor	40	50.0%	79	37.8%	51	34.7%	56	38.1%	118	37.0%	344	38.1%
Oppose	18	22.5%	78	37.3%	66	44.9%	53	36.1%	137	42.9%	352	39.0%
Unsure	22	27.5%	52	24.9%	30	20.4%	38	25.9%	64	20.1%	206	22.9%
TOTAL	80	100%	209	100%	147	100%	147	100%	319	100%	902	100%

Column percentages

Respondents with children under six are more in favor of making preschool part of the public schools.

Table 12-7: Crosstabulation of Support for Including Preschool with Public Schools by Having Young Children

	Respondents with:						TOTAL	
	Children under 6		Children of other ages		No children			
Include preschool:								
Favor	78	46.2%	124	32.7%	158	39.9%	360	38.1%
Oppose	56	33.1%	170	44.9%	138	34.8%	364	38.6%
Unsure	35	20.7%	85	22.4%	100	25.3%	220	23.3%
TOTAL	169	100%	379	100%	396	100%	944	100%

Column percentages

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Single parents are the most supportive (52%) for having before and after school care for children of working parents.

Table 12-8: Crosstabulation of Support for Before and After School Care by Family Make-Up

						TOTAL	
	Single parents		Paired parents		Non-parents		
Provide child care:							
Favor	33	52.4%	206	42.5%	129	33.1%	368 39.2%
Oppose	15	23.8%	186	38.4%	139	35.6%	340 36.2%
Unsure	15	23.8%	93	19.2%	122	31.3%	230 24.5%
TOTAL	63	100%	485	100%	390	100%	938 100%

Column percentages

The majority of respondents under thirty-five support before and after school care.

Table 12-9: Crosstabulation of Support for Before and After School Care by Age

	Respondent's age:										TOTAL	
	18 to 34		35 to 44		45 to 54		55 to 64		65 and older			
Provide child care:												
Favor	85	52.1%	135	39.9%	85	35.4%	31	30.7%	20	28.2%	356	39.0%
Oppose	42	25.8%	127	37.6%	91	37.9%	40	39.6%	31	43.7%	331	36.3%
Unsure	36	22.1%	76	22.5%	64	26.7%	30	29.7%	20	28.2%	226	24.8%
TOTAL	163	100%	338	100%	240	100%	101	100%	71	100%	913	100%

Column percentages

A majority of those with the lowest socioeconomic status are in favor of before and after school care.

Table 12-10: Crosstabulation of Support for Before and After School Care by Socioeconomic Status

	Socioeconomic status:										TOTAL	
	Low education, low income		Low education, average income		Average education, average income		High education, low income		High education, high income			
Provide child care:												
Favor	42	52.5%	77	36.8%	51	34.7%	54	36.7%	137	42.9%	361	40.0%
Oppose	21	26.3%	72	34.4%	61	41.5%	46	31.3%	120	37.6%	320	35.5%
Unsure	17	21.3%	60	28.7%	35	23.8%	47	32.0%	62	19.4%	221	24.5%
TOTAL	80	100%	209	100%	147	100%	147	100%	319	100%	902	100%

Column percentages

Having children under fourth grade increases the likelihood of supporting before and after school care; the younger the child, the more supportive the parent.

Table 12-11: Crosstabulation of Support for Before and After School Care by School Age Children

	Respondents with:						TOTAL	
	Children under 6		Children of other ages		No children			
Provide child care:								
Favor	92	54.4%	147	38.8%	132	33.3%	371	39.3%
Oppose	51	30.2%	150	39.6%	142	35.9%	343	36.3%
Unsure	26	15.4%	82	21.6%	122	30.8%	230	24.4%
TOTAL	169	100%	379	100%	396	100%	944	100%
	Children in grades K to 3		Children of other ages		No children			
Provide child care:								
Favor	98	52.1%	141	39.2%	132	33.3%	371	39.3%
Oppose	61	32.4%	140	38.9%	142	35.9%	343	36.3%
Unsure	29	15.4%	79	21.9%	122	30.8%	230	24.4%
TOTAL	188	100%	360	100%	396	100%	944	100%
	Children in grades 4 to 7		Children of other ages		No children			
Provide child care:								
Favor	73	41.7%	166	44.5%	132	33.3%	371	39.3%
Oppose	68	38.9%	133	35.7%	142	35.9%	343	36.3%
Unsure	34	19.4%	74	19.8%	122	30.8%	230	24.4%
TOTAL	175	100%	373	100%	396	100%	944	100%

Column percentages

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Question 13A/B

Assuming you have or expect to have elementary age children, and that transportation and tuition money were provided, please check the kinds of schools you would choose for your children. Please check all that apply.

Group A: Curriculum Types

1. **The regular curriculum now taught in most area schools**
2. **Basic curriculum, with strong emphasis on basic subjects like reading, writing, arithmetic, character development and firm discipline**
3. **Optional curriculum, with emphasis on the individual student's needs, interests and progress, flexible scheduling and self-discipline**
4. **A Montessori-type program, individualized, self-paced learning**
5. **The school in your neighborhood, regardless of type**

Group B: Private Schools

6. **Private religious school**
7. **Private non-religious school**
8. **"Home School"**

This question allowed for multiple responses; consequently, many respondents chose more than one alternative. A basic curriculum drew support from two-thirds (68%) of the respondents. A third of the sample (34%) selected an optional curriculum. There was also fair support for the Montessori program (25%) and the regular curriculum that now exists in most area schools (24%).

Table 13A-1: Which Curriculum Would You Choose for Your Children?

	Number of Yes Replies	Percent of Respondents
Preferred curriculum:		
Basic curriculum	645	68.3%
Optional curriculum	325	34.4%
Montessori program	233	24.7%
the regular curriculum	225	23.8%
the school in your neighborhood, regardless of type	115	12.2%
No opinion	61	6.5%
Total Respondents	945	

Question 13A (Cont'd)

Again, many respondents chose more than one alternative. Although about half who selected a basic curriculum only selected that, an equal number of respondents checked attendant responses. "Regular" and "optional" were the two most likely responses to accompany a "basic" selection.

As used by educators, "basic" and "optional" refer as much to teaching methods as subject matter. In preparing this survey, we excerpted from the wording used by the Anchorage School System to describe the classes. However, this distinction was apparently not clear to many people.

Many respondents circled the words "basic curriculum" from that choice along with the words "flexible scheduling and self-discipline" from the optional choice.

As shown in Table 13A-2, about 40% of the people who checked "basic curriculum" also checked "optional" and/or "Montessori"--choices not at all compatible in philosophy if teaching methods were being considered. A clue to the confusion was supplied by one respondent who commented, "I also believe basics come first but optional courses or subjects should also be available. When we can have both [Basics and Optional] we will have a truly great school system."

The conclusion, then, is that the strong support for basic curriculum is not necessarily an endorsement for the basic teaching approach, but may be a call for more emphasis on traditional subjects.

Table 13A-2: Curriculum Choices Showing Combinations Selected

	Count	Percent
Preferred curriculum:		
Basic	327	34.5%
Basic & regular	63	6.6%
Basic & Optional	81	8.5%
Basic & Montessori	74	7.8%
Basic, regular & Optional	33	3.5%
Basic, regular & Montessori	4	.4%
Basic, Optional & Montessori	42	4.4%
All four	21	2.2%
Optional	57	6.0%
Optional & regular	31	3.3%
Optional, Montessori & regular	14	1.5%
Optional & Montessori	46	4.9%
Montessori	25	2.6%
Montessori & regular	7	.7%
regular	52	5.5%
None checked	71	7.5%
TOTAL	948	100.0%

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Another example of the confusion about the meaning of this question is that those with no children are more supportive of a "basic" curriculum than parents, who might be more likely to know about the actual teaching methods.

The "Montessori program" receives the most support from single parents. An "optional curriculum" receives equal support from parents and nonparents, with 37% of all those surveyed making it a preference. The "basic" curriculum was the only other curriculum receiving more support (73%).

Table 13A-3: Crosstabulation of Curriculum Choices by Family Make-Up

	Family makeup by marital status:						Total "Agree" Responses
	Single parents	Paired parents	Single younger non-parents	Paired younger non-parents	Single older non-parents	Paired older non-parents	
Preferred curriculum:							
The regular curriculum	32.8%	31.1%	23.4%	20.0%	17.2%	13.8%	25.6%
Basic curriculum	62.3%	69.5%	76.6%	70.0%	74.1%	86.2%	72.8%
Optional curriculum	44.3%	36.1%	55.3%	46.7%	31.0%	27.7%	36.9%
Montessori program	34.4%	27.6%	27.7%	17.8%	25.9%	24.5%	26.4%
The school in your neighborhood, regardless of type	11.5%	13.0%	8.5%	15.6%	12.1%	14.5%	13.1%
Total respondents	61	463	47	90	58	159	878

Only one in five residents (19%) expressed a preference for private religious schools. One in six (16%) selected private non-religious schools, the one option which is unavailable in Anchorage.

Almost one in twelve (8%) are attracted to the idea of home school.

Table 13B-1 Which Schools Do You Choose for Your Children

	Number of Yes Replies	Percent of Respondents
Preferred school:		
private religious school	183	19.4%
private non-religious school	147	15.6%
"home School"	75	7.9%
None of the above	624	66.0%
Total Respondents	945	

48

The choice between a religious and non-religious private school tends to be more exclusive than inclusive, with most people only wanting religious private or non-religious private schools available and few wanting both.

Table 13B-2: Private School Choices Showing Combinations Selected

	Count	Percent
Preferred private school:		
religious	108	11.4%
religious & home	30	3.2%
non-religious	90	9.5%
home	24	2.5%
non-religious & home	8	.8%
religious & non-religious	24	2.5%
all three	14	1.5%
None checked	650	68.6%
TOTAL	948	100.0%

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Question 14

Recently a group of business people and others drew up the following list of skills that they believe a young person needs to have in order to be *ready for work*. Most of these skills can be taught at home as well as in school. For each skill, please indicate where the responsibility for teaching it lies, using a scale of one to five, with "one" being entirely at home and "five" being entirely at school.

1. **Reading**
2. **Speaking**
3. **Writing**
4. **Listening**
5. **Math computation**
6. **Problem solving**
7. **Use of technology such as computers**
8. **Knowing how to learn**
9. **Applying knowledge to new situations**
10. **How to work with others**
11. **Good manners**
12. **How to look for work**
13. **Honesty & integrity**
14. **Self-esteem**
15. **Willingness to accept advice & criticism**
16. **Getting work done on time**
17. **Showing up on time**
18. **Being accurate**
19. **Keeping at it, working quickly**

Those thirteen skills relating to problem solving and work-readiness were seen by the majority of respondents as a shared responsibility between home and school, underscoring the importance of communication between parents and educators.

The only items which the majority of respondents think are entirely or mostly the province of the home are teaching "good manners" (73%) and "honesty and integrity" (71%). On the other hand, three skills are seen as mostly or entirely the responsibility of the schools: the use of technology such as computers (80%), math computation (78%), and writing (67%).

Although there is little support for leaving the teaching of reading to the home, there are almost as many respondents who think such teaching should be a fifty-fifty sharing between home and school (47%) as those who think it is mostly or entirely the school's responsibility (48%).

Table 14-1: Where Does the Responsibility Lie

	Home		Half & half		School		Don't know	
Skills:								
use of technology such as computers	9	1.0%	170	18.0%	752	79.6%	14	1.5%
math computation	10	1.1%	192	20.3%	733	77.6%	10	1.1%
writing	15	1.6%	289	30.6%	634	67.1%	7	.7%
reading	44	4.7%	444	47.0%	452	47.8%	5	.5%
problem solving	94	9.9%	636	67.3%	208	22.0%	7	.7%
applying knowledge to new situations	94	9.9%	642	67.9%	198	21.0%	11	1.2%
knowing how to learn	108	11.4%	477	50.5%	346	36.6%	14	1.5%
how to work with others	131	13.9%	655	69.3%	151	16.0%	8	.8%
being accurate	136	14.4%	648	68.6%	146	15.4%	15	1.6%
keeping at it, working quickly	155	16.4%	644	68.1%	126	13.3%	20	2.1%
how to look for work	169	17.9%	547	57.9%	206	21.8%	23	2.4%
getting work done on time	207	21.9%	644	68.1%	85	9.0%	9	1.0%
speaking	251	26.6%	507	53.7%	175	18.5%	12	1.3%
listening	261	27.6%	591	62.5%	85	9.0%	8	.8%
self-esteem	322	34.1%	606	64.1%	9	1.0%	8	.8%
willingness to accept advice & criticism	346	36.6%	581	61.5%	10	1.1%	8	.8%
showing up on time	405	42.9%	497	52.6%	34	3.6%	9	1.0%
honesty & integrity	667	70.6%	269	28.5%	2	.2%	7	.7%
good manners	694	73.4%	244	25.8%	1	.1%	6	.6%

Percentages are of each row and categories have been compressed for clarity.

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There is indication of an emerging trend toward holding schools accountable for teaching children the skills that working parents do not have time to teach. Parents who stay at home with their children are more likely to hold the home responsible for teaching some of the skills. In households where both parents or the single parent is employed outside the home, respondents rely on the schools to teach more of the skills.

Table 14-2: Crosstabulation of Where Does the Responsibility Lie by Working Families

	Working parents:				Total "Agree" Responses
	Single working parent:	Paired working parent:	Non-working parent:	Non-parent:	
Home has the responsibility for:					
use of technology such as computers	2.9%	1.2%	3.2%	.3%	1.1%
math computation	2.9%	1.2%	2.1%	.9%	1.3%
writing	2.9%	1.2%	4.3%	1.8%	1.9%
reading	5.9%	4.3%	8.5%	6.0%	5.6%
problem solving	14.7%	9.8%	16.0%	12.0%	11.7%
applying knowledge to new situations	14.7%	11.1%	14.9%	11.7%	12.0%
knowing how to learn	11.8%	13.8%	18.1%	12.3%	13.6%
how to work with others	14.7%	16.3%	18.1%	16.8%	16.7%
being accurate	17.6%	15.4%	21.3%	18.0%	17.3%
keeping at it, working quickly	20.6%	15.4%	20.2%	23.7%	19.7%
how to look for work	26.5%	24.3%	16.0%	19.8%	21.5%
getting work done on time	20.6%	21.8%	25.5%	31.5%	26.3%
speaking	35.3%	36.0%	34.0%	26.7%	31.8%
listening	17.6%	35.4%	37.2%	31.5%	33.2%
self-esteem	41.2%	40.6%	36.2%	42.3%	40.8%
willingness to accept advice & criticism	38.2%	42.5%	37.2%	47.7%	43.9%
showing up on time	44.1%	51.1%	48.9%	53.5%	51.5%
honesty & integrity	79.4%	84.9%	84.0%	84.4%	84.4%
good manners	91.2%	86.8%	88.3%	88.0%	87.7%
Total respondents	34	325	94	333	786

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Question 15A

How many adults eighteen and over live in the household, including yourself and members who live with you when they are not away at school?

Question 15B

How many children seventeen and younger live in the household?

Most typically--68% of the time--respondent households have two adults present. One in seven households have only one adult. Fifty percent had no children under age seventeen living in the household.

Table 15: Make-Up of Household

	Count	Percent
Adults 18 or over:		
One	140	14.8%
Two	643	67.8%
Three	124	13.1%
Four	38	4.0%
Five	3	.3%
TOTAL	948	100.0%
Children 17 or younger:		
None	472	49.8%
One	192	20.3%
Two	188	19.8%
Three	71	7.5%
Four	18	1.9%
Five	6	.6%
Six	1	.1%
TOTAL	948	100.0%

Question 16

Please circle which income category best describes your total household income last year from all sources before taxes?

The median household income for respondents was $58,060.00

Table 16: Income of the Household

	Count	Percent
Income:		
Less than $15,000	25	2.8%
$15,000 to $30,000	95	10.5%
$31,000 to $50,000	236	26.0%
$51,000 to $70,000	244	26.8%
$71,000 or more	309	34.0%
TOTAL	909	100.0%

Percentages based on answers; 39 respondents (4.1%) did not answer.

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Question 17A

Do you have a child or children seventeen or younger in the Anchorage school system who do not live with you?

Question 17B

Do you have grandchildren in the Anchorage school system?

One of sixteen respondents (6%) indicated they have a child or children in the Anchorage school system who are seventeen or younger and do not live with them. One in every seven respondents said they have grandchildren in the Anchorage school system.

Table 17: **Respondents Who Have Grandchildren and Children not Living with Them**

	Count	Percent
Children who do not live in household	61	6.4%
No such children	876	92.4%
No answer	11	1.2%
TOTAL	948	100.0%
Grandchildren	135	14.2%
No grandchildren	808	85.2%
No answer	5	.5%
TOTAL	948	100.0%

Question 18

In the past five years, how many times have you moved?

The sample shows considerable stability in residence. Out of six typical Anchorage residents, four had not moved in the last five years, one person moved once, and one person had found it necessary to move more than once.

Table 18: **Times Moved the Last Five Years**

	Count	Percent
Moved:		
None	618	66.0%
One	167	17.8%
Two	75	8.0%
Three	45	4.8%
Four	15	1.6%
Five or more	17	1.8%
TOTAL	937	100.0%

Percentages based on answers; 11 respondents did not answer.

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Information on Respondent and Spouse/Partner

Question 19A

Are you **1. Female** **2. Male**

Six of ten respondents (62%) are female.

Table 19A: Gender of Respondent

	Count	Percent
Respondent:		
female	586	61.8%
male	361	38.1%
unknown	1	.1%
TOTAL	948	100.0%

Question 19B

Is your partner **1. Female** **2. Male**

Sixty-three percent of respondents' spouses or partners are male.

Table 19B: Gender of Spouse or Partner

	Count	Percent
Spouse or partner:		
female	285	37.2%
male	479	62.5%
unknown	2	.3%
TOTAL	766	100.0%

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Question 20A

What year were you born?

The average age of respondents was 44.7 years, with a median age of forty-three.

Table 20A: Age of Respondent

	Count	Percent
Respondent:		
18 to 24	11	1.2%
25 to 34	152	16.6%
35 to 44	340	37.1%
45 to 54	241	26.3%
55 to 64	102	11.1%
65 and older	71	7.7%
TOTAL	917	100.0%

Percentages based on answers; 31 respondents (3.3%) did not answer.

Question 20B

Spouse or Partner: How old is he/she?

The average age of spouses or partners was 44.3 years, with a median age of forty-three.

Table 20B: Age of Respondent's Spouse or Partner

	Count	Percent
Spouse or partner:		
18 to 24	12	1.6%
25 to 34	122	16.2%
35 to 44	301	40.0%
45 to 54	183	24.3%
55 to 64	78	10.4%
65 and older	57	7.6%
TOTAL	753	100.0%

Percentages based on answers; 13 respondents did not answer.

Question 21A

What is your race?

1. Caucasian
2. Hispanic
3. Afro-American
4. Asian
5. Alaska Native (specify)
6. American Indian

Question 21B

What was the first language you spoke?

1. English
2. Any Asian language
3. Spanish
4. Any American Indian language
5. Alaska Native (specify)
8. Other

More than nine out of every ten respondents were Caucasian, and for 96% of them English was their first spoken language.

Spouses and partners of respondents were 91% Caucasian, and for 93% of them English was their first spoken language.

Table 21: Race and First Language of Respondent and Respondent's Spouse or Partner

	Respondent		Spouse or Partner	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Race:				
Caucasian	855	91.4%	691	91.0%
Afro-American	25	2.7%	21	2.8%
Alaska Native	19	2.0%	17	2.2%
Asian	13	1.4%	12	1.6%
Hispanic	9	1.0%	10	1.3%
American Indian	7	.7%	3	.4%
other	7	.7%	5	.7%
TOTAL	935	100.0%	759	100.0%
Language:				
English	907	95.9%	708	92.5%
any Asian	11	1.2%	18	2.4%
Spanish	9	1.0%	6	.8%
Alaska Native	1	.1%	2	.3%
other	18	1.9%	31	4.1%
TOTAL	946	100.0%	765	100.0%

Percentages based on answers; no answer was given about race for 9 respondents and 7 partners. No answer was given about language for 1 respondent and partner.

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Question 22A

Regarding regular school, including college and university, how many years of formal education have you completed?

What Certificates and Degrees did you earn?

Anchorage residents returning this survey were a highly educated group! The two most common levels of formal education held by respondents were high school diploma/GED (29%) and bachelor degree (29%). An impressive one in six of the people (17%) held a graduate degree.

Spouses or partners have a little less formal education than the respondents, with 36% having a high school diploma/GED, 23% holding a bachelor's degree, and 14% having earned a graduate degree.

Question 22B

Regarding vocational, business, trade, apprenticeship schools..., how many months or years of such training did you have?

More than one-third of the populace (38%) claim to have some vocational training. However, some of the answers received clearly indicate respondents' confusion over the difference between vocational and formal educational training. Therefore, we suspect this information to be somewhat skewed.

Thirty-one percent of spouses and partners have some vocational training. Again, some of the answers received clearly indicated confusion over the difference between vocational and formal educational training. Again, this information may be somewhat skewed.

Table 22: Formal and Vocational Education of Respondent and Respondent's Spouse or Partner

	Respondent		Spouse or Partner	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Formal education:				
None	13	1.4%	26	3.5%
High school diploma, GED	271	28.7%	267	35.6%
Vocational certificate	79	8.4%	64	8.5%
Professional certificate	69	7.3%	47	6.3%
Associate degree	87	9.2%	71	9.5%
Bachelor degree	270	28.6%	169	22.5%
Graduate degree	156	16.5%	106	14.1%
TOTAL	945	100.0%	750	100.0%
Some vocational training	359	38.0%	235	30.7%
None	586	62.0%	531	69.3%
TOTAL	945	100.0%	766	100.0%
Vocationally earned:				
Certificate	206	21.8%	126	16.4%
License	118	12.5%	83	10.8%
Both	45	4.8%	34	4.4%
Neither	578	61.0%	523	68.3%
TOTAL	947	100.0%	766	100.0%

Percentages based on answers; no answer was given for 2 respondents and for 16 partners.

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Question 23

Many people learn their skills on the job, or teach themselves. Which of the following professional skills do you have, skills you can use to make a living? (Please don't include "handy-man" skills.) Please check all that apply.

1. **Building trades skills, (carpentry, plumbing, electrical...)**
2. **Commercial fishing**
3. **Bookkeeping, clerical, word processing**
4. **Child care**
5. **Mechanical, car repair**
6. **Retail**
7. **Real estate**

Since most of the respondents were women, they are high in skills used in traditional female jobs, skills such as bookkeeping and clerical (49%), child care (29%) and retail (28%).

Reflecting the higher percentage of men in the spouse/partner category, we find building skills more prominent (24%).

Table 23: Job Skills of Respondent and Respondent's Spouse or Partner

	Respondent		Spouse or Partner	
	Yes Replies	Percent of Respondents	Yes Replies	Percent of Respondents
Skills:				
bookkeeping, clerical, word processing...	462	48.8%	211	27.5%
child care...	275	29.0%	103	13.4%
retail...	266	28.1%	134	17.5%
real estate...	76	8.0%	50	6.5%
building trades skills...	150	15.8%	185	24.2%
mechanical, car repair...	62	6.5%	106	13.8%
commercial fishing...	35	3.7%	47	6.1%
other...	358	37.8%	328	42.8%
None listed...	112	11.8%	114	14.9%
Total Respondents...	947		766	

* Major categories of other are computer skills, electronic skills, professional skills at all levels, printing, hair dressing, bus or truck driving and many others.

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Question 24

Are you now enrolled in school?

1. **Full time**
2. **Part time**
3. **Not in school**

If enrolled in school, are you taking classes in

1. **High School**
2. **College/University**
3. **Graduate School**
4. **Vocational School, Business college, Apprenticeship, etc.**

One out of six respondents (16%) were enrolled in school at the time of the survey. In most cases, they were enrolled in a college or university.

Only one in ten spouses or partners were enrolled in school at the time of the survey. In most cases, this enrollment was in a college or university.

Table 24: Ongoing Education of the Respondent and Respondent's Spouse or Partner

	Respondent		Spouse or Partner	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Enrolled in school:				
full time	25	2.7%	19	2.5%
part time	121	13.0%	57	7.6%
not in school	788	84.4%	674	89.9%
TOTAL	934	100.0%	750	100.0%
Type of school:				
High school			2	.3%
College/ University	103	11.0%	42	5.6%
Graduate school	36	3.9%	19	2.5%
Vocational, business or apprenticeship.	7	.7%	12	1.6%
No answer			1	.1%
Not enrolled in school	788	84.4%	674	89.9%
TOTAL	934	100.0%	750	100.0%

Percentages based on answers; no answer was given for 14 respondents and 16 partners.

Question 25

How many jobs are you working this week? Please check all that apply.

1. **One job**
2. **More than one job**
3. **Homemaking and/or parenting**
4. **Unemployed**
5. **Retired**
6. **Student**

Most people in Anchorage have full schedules; many hold down a job or juggle a job while homemaking and/or parenting.

Slightly more spouses or partners--most of whom are men--are juggling work and home life.

Table 25: Employment of the Respondent and Respondent's Spouse or Partner

	Respondent		Spouse or Partner	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Employment:				
one job	479	50.8%	446	58.7%
two jobs	60	6.4%	38	5.0%
one job & homemaking	166	17.6%	107	14.1%
two jobs & homemaking	32	3.4%	16	2.1%
homemaking	107	11.3%	61	8.0%
unemployed	22	2.3%	25	3.3%
retired	73	7.7%	61	8.0%
full time student	4	.4%	6	.8%
TOTAL	943	100.0%	760	100.0%

Percentages based on answers; no answers were given for 5 respondents and 6 partners.

Information on Respondent's Children

Question 26

Are your children **1. Female 2. Male**

There are 1071 children[29] in the 948 households surveyed. Of these, 52% are male; 48%, female.

Table 26: Gender of Children

	Count	Percent
Gender of child:		
female	518	48.4%
male	553	51.6%
TOTAL	1071	100.0%

Question 27

How old are your children?

There exists a fairly even spread of children ages six through eighteen, with the slight exception of those age nine through twelve years who make up more of the sample than any other age group (22%). The average age of the children was eleven years.

One in eight children (12%) are grown (19 years or older).

Table 27: Age of the Children

	Count	Percent
Age of child:		
Infant thru 2	96	9.0%
3 thru 5	125	11.7%
6 thru 8	173	16.2%
9 thru 12	230	21.5%
13 thru 15	155	14.5%
16 thru 18	166	15.5%
19 thru 22	80	7.5%
23 thru 43	45	4.2%
TOTAL	1070	100.0%

Percentages based on answers; Age was not given for 5 children.

[29] The survey only asked for information about the first four children in a family.

Question 28

Approximately what percentage of the time do your children live in your home?

1. **1-25% of the time**
2. **26-50% of the time**
3. **51-75% of the time**
4. **76-100% of the time**

Five of six children (83%) spent at least three-fourths of their time living in the respondents' households. Twelve percent of the children spent less than a quarter of their time in the household, perhaps a result of joint custody arrangements or older children's having moved out of the home.

Table 28: Percent of the Time Children Live in the Household

	Count	Percent
Live in household:		
0-25% of the time.....	129	12.0%
26-50% of the time....	27	2.5%
51-75% of the time....	22	2.1%
76-100% of the time...	895	83.4%
TOTAL.....	1073	100.0%

Percentages based on answers; No answer was given for 2 children.

Question 29

What was the first language they spoke?

English is the first languge of 97% of the children.

Table 29: Language First Spoken

	Count	Percent
First language:		
English.....	1040	97.1%
any Asian.....	9	.8%
Spanish.....	8	.7%
Alaska Native.....	3	.3%
other.....	11	1.0%
TOTAL.....	1071	100.0%

Percentages based on answers; no answer was given for 4 children.

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Question 30

What grades are your children in?

One-fourth of the children were infants or in preschool or kindergarten (24%); another one-fourth (27%) were in grade school (first through fifth grades).

One in eight of the children (13%) were enrolled in college.

Table 30: Grade of the Children

	Count	Percent
Grade in school:		
infant, preschool, kindergarten	259	24.1%
first thru fifth	285	26.6%
sixth thru eighth	154	14.4%
ninth thru twelfth	221	20.6%
college	136	12.7%
vocational, business or apprenticeship.	10	.9%
special education	1	.1%
Not in school	7	.7%
TOTAL	1073	100.0%

Percentages based on answers; no answer was given for 2 children.

Question 31

If in school, what school do they go to?

Most of the younger children are not yet in school. In the K-through-twelve category, which serves 65% of the children, most attend Anchorage public schools.

Of the 135 grown children in college, a near-even split exists between those enrolled in Alaskan universities and those enrolled in universities and colleges in other states or abroad.

Table 31: School Attended

	Count	Percent
Young children:		
not in school yet	166	15.6%
private preschool	28	2.6%
Kindergarten to 12:		
Anchorage Public schools	651	61.1%
Anchorage Private schools	40	3.8%
home teaching & correspondance	12	1.1%
Whaley or McLaughlin	6	.6%
Alaska other than Anchorage	5	.5%
Outside	9	.8%
not in school	6	.6%
College and vocational:		
University of Alaska *	67	6.3%
APU	1	.1%
vocational in Anchorage	8	.8%
Outside colleges & Universities	67	6.3%
TOTAL	1066	100.0%

Percentages based on answers; no answer was given for 9 children.

* It was necessary to group UAA, UAF & the 1 UAS, because many respondents said "University of Alaska" without specifying location.

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Question 32

On the whole, what kind of grades do your children earn?

According to fond parents, more than three-fifths of the children (62%) earn A's & B's, and another 30% earn B's & C's.

Table 32: Grades Earned on the Whole

	Count	Percent
Grades earned:		
A's & B's	521	62.3%
B's & C's	247	29.5%
C's & D's	54	6.5%
D's & F's	14	1.7%
TOTAL	836	100.0%

This question was not answered for 239 children because they were not in school, or were in ungraded classes.

Question 33

How pleased are you with your child's performance in school? For each area of learning, please rate how pleased you are on a scale of one to three, with "one" being "displeased," and "three" being "pleased."

1. **Reading and writing skills**
2. **Social skills like cooperating with others**
3. **Math and science skills**
4. **Physical skills like sports**

At least two-thirds of the respondents were pleased with their children's performances in all of the listed areas. The greatest percentage of respondents (82%) were pleased with the social skills their children displayed.

Table 33-1: How Pleased Are You with Your Child's Performance in School

	Pleased		Neutral		Displeased	
Performance at:						
reading & writing skills	670	74.0%	140	15.5%	95	10.5%
math & science skills	615	68.9%	175	19.6%	103	11.5%
social skills like cooperating with others	745	81.8%	115	12.6%	51	5.6%
physical skills like sports	643	71.2%	202	22.4%	58	6.4%

Percentages are of each row.
Respondents didn't answer if children were not in school, or were not yet learning the subject; therefore totals vary for the subjects.

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As might be expected, satisfaction with children's performance in school is highly correlated with the grades their parents report.

Table 33-2: Crosstabulation of Pleased with Child's Performance by Grades Earned

	Grades earned:			Total "Pleased" Responses
	A's & B's	B's & C's	C's, D's & F's	
Pleased with:				
reading & writing skills	89.3%	60.4%	36.7%	77.7%
math & science skills	83.4%	55.1%	24.5%	71.6%
social skills like cooperating with others	89.6%	83.7%	55.1%	85.8%
physical skills like sports	76.4%	70.0%	59.2%	73.5%
Total Respondents	512	227	49	788

Question 34

Does the child work?

1. Has a part-time job
2. Has a full-time job
3. Doesn't have a job

In restricting the responses to involve only those children who were ninth grade or better, we learned that the majority do work; most, part-time (47%); and a few, full-time (7%).

Table 34-1: Does the Child Work?

	Count	Percent
Job held by child:		
part time job	178	46.6%
full time job	25	6.5%
no job	179	46.9%
TOTAL	382	100.0%

This question was not considered applicable to 681 children because they were too young (under 9th grade;) however, a few children younger than that actually did work, and they are included .

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In crosstabulating the responses with the young person's level in school, we noted that 38% of those in high school had jobs and 73% of those in college worked at jobs.

Table 34-2: Crosstabulation of Job Held by Grade in School

	Grade in school:				TOTAL	
	Ninth thru twelfth	College	Vocational, business or apprentice	Not in school		
Child works:						
part time	82 37.4%	73 57.0%	5 50.0%	2 28.6%	178	46.8%
full time	2 .9%	21 16.4%	2 20.0%		25	6.6%
no job	135 61.6%	34 26.6%	3 30.0%	5 71.4%	177	46.6%
TOTAL	219 100%	128 100%	10 100%	7 100%	380	100%

Column percentages

Note: In addition to the above, 11 children in sixth through eighth grades held part time jobs, as did 4 in first through fifth and 1 in kindergarten, a little child who works in the family shop, as do his slightly older siblings.

Question 35

Which of the following most closely represents your hope for your children directly after high school (not in the long run)?

1. College
2. Vocational school
3. Job
4. Marriage
5. Military

For 80% of the children, parents hope that their children will go to college directly after high school. Another 4% list both vocational or military possibilities as well as aspirations for a college education.

Table 35-1: Hope for the Child Directly After High School

	Count	Percent
Hierarchical listing:		
college *	862	80.2%
college & vocational school or military *	45	4.2%
vocational school, military or both *	45	4.2%
job or job & marriage	26	2.4%
marriage	5	.5%
other	20	1.9%
no answer	72	6.7%
TOTAL	1075	100.0%

* These categories may also include job, marriage or both.

Other answer:
9 whatever the child wants
8 bible school, go on a mission
1 go into business for himself
1 self reliance
1 get a GED

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Question 35 (Cont'd)

When crosstabulating the hopes of parents for their children by the children's gender, we learned something very interesting -- respondents are slightly more likely to hope that female children will attend college.

Female respondents are more likely to have college aspirations for their female than for their male children. On the other hand, male respondents did not differentiate between their male or female children in hoping the children would go to college.

Table 35-2: Crosstabulation of Hope for Child by Gender of Child and Respondent

	Gender of Respondent:				TOTAL
	Female		Male		
	Gender of child:		Gender of child:		
	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Heirarchical list of hopes:					
college *	84.4%	76.5%	80.1%	80.3%	80.2%
college & vocational school or military *.	2.4%	6.2%	2.6%	4.4%	4.1%
vocational school, military or both *.	2.1%	6.5%	2.1%	5.5%	4.2%
job or job & marriage	3.1%	2.2%	2.1%	2.2%	2.4%
marriage	.3%	.3%	1.6%		.5%
other	1.8%	1.9%	2.1%	1.6%	1.9%
no answer	5.8%	6.5%	9.4%	6.0%	6.7%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Column percentages

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Information on Respondent's family

Question 36

About how many hours did you and your children spend watching television yesterday (including watching videos and playing video games)?

For ages three through eighteen, the average hours of reported television viewing was stable at around two hours a day.[30]

Table 36A: Mean Hours of TV Viewing by Children per Age of Child

	Age of child:								TOTAL
	Infant thru 2	3 thru 5	6 thru 8	9 thru 12	13 thru 15	16 thru 18	19 thru 22	23 thru 43	
Children's viewing in hours:									
average:	1.0	2.2	2.1	2.0	2.2	1.9	1.2	2.1	1.9
median:	.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	2.0
maximum:	10.0	12.0	12.0	10.0	17.0	11.0	6.0	5.0	17.0

The minimum was 0 in all cases.

Table 36B: Mean Hours of TV Viewing by Children per Hours of TV Viewing by Respondent

	Respondent's viewing hours:									TOTAL
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	8	18	
Children's viewing in hours:										
average:	1.2	1.6	2.3	2.1	3.0	2.4	2.2	8.3	10.0	2.0
median:	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.5	2.0	6.0	10.0	2.0
maximum:	6.0	5.0	12.0	7.0	6.0	5.0	6.0	17.0	10.0	17.0

The minimum was 0 in all cases.

The average television viewing of children does increase slightly on weekends.

Table 36C: TV Viewing by Day of the Week

	Day of the week							TOTAL
	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
Children's viewing in hours:								
average:	2.1	1.6	1.5	2.0	1.7	2.0	2.5	1.9
median:	2.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
maximum:	6.0	8.0	5.0	17.0	12.0	10.0	10.0	17.0

The minimum was 0 in all cases.

[30] This figure may be skewed by the survey's having been filled out during spring break. If parents watch TV, it is more likely that a child in the household will do so. Children's viewing increases with that of their parents, especially at the higher levels of viewing.

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Question 37A

How many meals did most of your household eat together yesterday?

Question 37B

What day of the week was yesterday?

Anchorage households eat together at least once a day. On weekends families generally eat more meals together, averaging almost two.

Table 37: Crosstabulation of Meals Eaten Together by Day of The Week

	Day of the week							TOTAL
	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
Meals together:								
None	4.8%	3.0%	15.0%	15.2%	6.2%	8.2%	6.5%	7.2%
One	24.0%	51.5%	37.5%	54.5%	48.5%	46.4%	29.2%	40.0%
Two	44.2%	40.7%	32.5%	30.3%	30.9%	25.5%	36.6%	34.6%
Three	26.9%	4.5%	15.0%		14.4%	20.0%	28.0%	18.2%
Average	1.9	1.5	1.5	1.2	1.5	1.6	1.9	1.6
Median	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0

Note: The survey reached respondents during Spring break, which may have affected the results for Thursday and Friday.

Question 38

On most days, who cares for your children age five and younger? Please check all that apply.

1. **No children age two to five**
2. **You or your spouse or partner**
3. **Another relative**
4. **A paid care giver in your home**
5. **A paid care giver in the care giver's home**
6. **A child care center**

Seventy-two percent of those having children age five and younger care for at least one of their children on most days. More than four of ten (43%) respondents use some kind of paid care giver or day care center for a child or children in this age group.

Note: More children are cared for in homes than in centers.

Table 38: Who Cares for children Age Five and Younger on Most Days?

	Number of Yes Replies	Percent of Respondents
Child age 5 or younger:		
you or your spouse or partner	128	71.5%
a paid care giver in the care giver's home	43	24.0%
a child care center	25	14.0%
another relative	16	8.9%
a paid care giver in your home	9	5.0%
a friend or neighbor	3	1.7%
Total Respondents	179	

377 respondents had no children in this age group.

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Question 39A

Directly after school, what do your children in kindergarten through grade three usually do? Please check all that apply.

1. **No children in kindergarten through grade three**
2. **Stay at school for activities, tutoring or day care**
3. **Go to a paid baby-sitter's home**
4. **Go to a friend or relative's home**
5. **Go to a day care center**
6. **Go home where an adult is waiting**
7. **Go home where an older brother or sister is waiting**
8. **Go home and wait for someone older to come home**

Question 39B

Directly after school, what do your children in grades four through seven usually do? Please check all that apply.

1. **No children in grades four through seven**
2. **Stay at school for activities, tutoring or day care**
3. **Go to a paid baby-sitter's home**
4. **Go to a friend or relative's home**
5. **Go to a day care center**
6. **Go home where an adult is waiting**
7. **Go home where an older brother or sister is waiting**
8. **Go home and wait for someone older to come home**

Seven of ten parents (72%) with children in kindergarten through third grade report that their children go home directly after school to where an adult is waiting.

This percentage declines (to 65%) when the children are in fourth through the seventh grade.

"Latchstring kids"--those who go home and wait for someone older to come home--make up 3% of the kindergarten through third grade sample and 17% of the fourth through seventh grade children.

Question 39 (Cont'd)

Table 39-1: Where Do Your Children Go After School?

	Number of Yes Replies	Percent of Respondents
Children in kindergarten through grade 3:		
go home where an adult is waiting	139	72.0%
go to a paid baby-sitter's home	22	11.4%
go home where an older brother or sister is waiting.	16	8.3%
stay at school for activities, tutoring or day care.	15	7.8%
go to a day care center	12	6.2%
go to a friend or relative's home	10	5.2%
go home & wait for someone older to come home	5	2.6%
other *	4	2.1%
Total Respondents	193	
Children in graces 4 thru 7:		
go home where an adult is waiting	113	64.6%
go home where an older brother or sister is waiting.	33	18.9%
go home & wait for someone older to come home	30	17.1%
stay at school for activities, tutoring or day care.	14	8.0%
go to a friend or relative's home	9	5.1%
go to a paid baby-sitter's home	6	3.4%
go to a day care center	5	2.9%
other #	11	6.3%
Total Respondents	175	

362 respondents had no children in kindergarten through grade 3 and 380 had none in graces 4 through 7.

* Other answers:
2 go to lessons
2 are in home school

\# Other answers:
8 Go to lessons (music, dance, athletic)
2 are in home school
1 goes to a job - babysitting

"Latchstring Kids"

Thirty-two of the households in the sample contained thirty-five "latchstring kids."

- Twenty-six of the thirty-two households with "latchstring kids" had two parents.
- Both parents worked in twenty-two of the twenty-six two-parent households.
- Sixty-eight percent of the "latchstring kids" lived in households with incomes over $50,000.00.
- The average education of respondents in those households was 15.8 years.

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Question 40

Who reads to your children now, or who did when they were little? Please check all that apply.

1. **Mother**
2. **Father**
3. **Other person (specify)**
4. **No one**

Both mothers (92%) and fathers (74%) were the primary individuals who read to their children, either now or when the children were little.

Table 40: Who Reads or Read to Your Children?

	Number of Yes Replies	Percent of Respondents
Reader:		
mother	510	91.9%
father	413	74.4%
other person *	177	31.9%
no one	10	1.8%
No answer	22	4.0%
Total Respondents	555	

* Mostly older siblings, but also grand parents & friends

Question 41A

Do you or your spouse/partner help your children with their homework?

1. **Often**
2. **Sometimes**
3. **Never**
4. **They don't ask for help**
5. **I/we would if I/we understood the subjects better**
6. **Someone else in the household helps them**

Question 41B

By what grade should a child take full responsibility for getting homework done (including asking for help if it is needed)?

Anchorage parents claimed to be involved with their children's homework, with 41% saying they helped their children often with homework and another 51% saying they sometimes helped.

The median grade level at which respondents thought children should be responsible for getting their homework done on their own was the fourth grade.

Table 41: Help with Homework and by What Grade Should a Child Take Responsibility

	Count	Percent
How often do you help:		
often	193	41.2%
sometimes	237	50.5%
never	4	.9%
they don't ask for help	11	2.3%
would if I/we understood it better	10	2.1%
someone else helps them	4	.9%
No answer	10	2.1%
TOTAL	469	100.0%
Responsible by grade:		
Preschool	5	1.0%
First	57	11.0%
Second	31	6.0%
Third	88	16.9%
Fourth	109	21.0%
Fifth	52	10.0%
Sixth	68	13.1%
Seventh	57	11.0%
Eighth	15	2.9%
Ninth	17	3.3%
Tenth	12	2.3%
Eleventh	3	.6%
Twelfth	4	.8%
Parents should always monitor	2	.4%
TOTAL	520	100.0%

86 respondents said they did not help with homework because their children were too young, and are not included above.
35 respondents did not answer the second question.

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Question 42A

Did a child of yours ever experience discrimination in the Anchorage school system from a teacher?

Question 42B

If a child of yours has experienced discrimination, please check all of the types of discrimination the child experienced.

1. Racial
2. Sex
3. Age
4. Appearance
5. Because of a physical handicap
6. Because of a mental or a learning handicap
7. Because the teacher didn't seem to like him/her
8. By comparison to brother/sister

Two of seven (29%) respondents with children said their children had experienced discrimination from a teacher. In more than two-thirds of these cases, the basis for discrimination was said to be that the teacher simply did not like their children.

One-quarter of the respondents claimed a teacher discriminated against their children because of a child's mental or learning handicap.

Table 42: Discrimination Experienced by Your Children

	Number of Yes Replies	Percent of Respondents
Respondent's children:		
Experienced no discrimination	347	71.4%
Experienced discrimination	139	28.6%
Total Respondents	486	100.0%
Types of discrimination:		
the teacher didn't like him or her	96	69.1%
mental or learning handicap	35	25.2%
appearance	26	18.7%
comparison with a brother or sister	20	14.4%
sex	19	13.7%
racial	15	10.8%
age	8	5.8%
physical handicap	8	5.8%
other *	8	5.8%
Total Respondents	139	

* Other kinds of discrimination reported:

- 4 Alienness, including:
  - 1 social status
  - 1 too much ability
  - 1 too shy and quiet
  - 1 came from a different school
- 4 Miscellaneous, including:
  - 3 didn't like the respondent
  - 1 "Everyone experiences discrimination."

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Question 43

The following is a list of school activities. Please check those in which your children have been involved.

1. Sports
2. Plays
3. Music festivals
4. Dances
5. Art shows
6. Science fairs
7. School clubs

The most frequently identified activity in which the respondents' children had been involved was sports, which was noted by 64% of those with children. Next most frequently mentioned were science fairs and music festivals (46% and 45%, respectively).

One in five respondents (18%) said there was no activity on the list in which their children had participated.

Table 43: In What School Activities Have Your Children Been Involved?

	Number of Yes Replies	Percent of Respondents
School activities:		
sports	355	64.0%
science fairs	255	45.9%
music festivals	247	44.5%
plays	211	38.0%
school clubs	191	34.4%
art shows	177	31.9%
dances	165	29.7%
None of the above:	100	18.0%
Total Responcents	555	

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Question 44

Please check those programs in which a child of yours has participated.

1. **Bilingual class**
2. **Chapter 1 class**
3. **SAVE program**
4. **King Career Center**
5. **Head Start program**
6. **A home teaching program**
7. **Search program**

Fewer than 10% of children participated in any of the programs; three-quarters of the respondents with children indicated that their children have participated in none of the programs listed.

The program most frequently used was the bilingual class, with 8.3% claiming participation.

Table 44: In What School Programs Has A Child of Yours Participated?

	Number of Yes Replies	Percent of Respondents
School programs:		
bilingual class *	46	8.3%
King Career Center	30	5.4%
Save program	23	4.1%
a home teaching program	23	4.1%
Head Start program	13	2.3%
Search program	11	2.0%
Chapter 1 class	11	2.0%
None of the above:	426	76.8%
Total Respondents	555	

* Some respondents seemed to confuse bilingual classes with language classes.

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Qualitative Research with "Hard-to-Reach" Anchorage Residents[31]

Executive Summary

Most of the reoccurring themes emerging from the focus group research focused on barriers to success in both the school systems -- Anchorage School District (ASD) and the University of Alaska, Anchorage (UAA) -- and in the work place.

Understandably, the Anchorage School District and UAA took the brunt of criticism from residents, with "education" most frequently equated to schools. However, the shortcomings in the business community occurred in extremely critical areas, requiring immediate attention if the present work force (and the work force of the future) is to be equally accessible to minorities. The educational institutions must address their shortcomings with a view to finding qualified minority applicants for the work force.

Anchorage Residents' Needs From the Anchorage School District

" *More Multicultural Awareness* "

Work to develop a sensitivity to minority concerns through

- multicultural awareness classes for both staff (including administrators) and students,
- increasing awareness of how subliminal discrimination evidences itself.

" *Equal Educational Opportunity and Challenge* "

Standardize the opportunities for minority students in all schools. Parents perceive that "higher class" neighborhood schools are allocated more and better supplies and attention than those in which minority concentration is high.

The groups repeatedly pinpointed the need for

- more minority teachers and counselors,
- less crowded classrooms, and
- not just passing students on regardless of level of achievement.

Black, Native, Asian and Hispanic parents in particular felt there is not enough challenge offered to their children. Stereotyping denigrates the abilities of these minorities, and they are passed over as being "dumb." Black mothers feel teachers are often intimidated by their offspring "starting around the fourth or fifth grades."

Only Hispanics voiced a need to be involved in the placement of their children in bilingual classes. It was obviously an issue of great concern to them.

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[31] Please see Appendix B, page 185 for a discussion of the Research Objectives, Survey Sample and Methodology of the Qualitative Research with "Hard-to-Reach" Anchorage Residents.

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" *Better Parent/Teacher Contact* "

Bolster the self-esteem level of minorities through increased involvement of parents with the schools. Orient the parents to the operational patterns of the schools and integrate minority cultural mores into those patterns. (One observation of Native Alaskans, for instance, is that the schools do not initiate communication with parents, a practice well-established in the villages and therefore expected by those moving into the city.)

"One cannot have self-esteem
unless he or she has something to be esteemed about."

" *More Intervention Programs* "

Too frequently a child who has academic or behavioral problems is not tested for functional or emotional disabilities. The District needs some compassionate intervention programs to stop further deterioration.

"Coping skills" courses are needed. Drug, alcohol awareness, and sex education courses were highly recommended. Among skills to be addressed are parenting, cultural diversity, and interpersonal skills such as conflict resolution and the setting and adjusting of priorities.

Anchorage Residents' Needs From the University Of Alaska, Anchorage

It is abundantly clear from the focus group research that UAA is not meeting the needs of minorities. The system is found to be intimidating, discriminatory and unfriendly to these groups, particularly women and single parents. Parents and students suggested the following:

" *Develop a sensitivity to minority concerns* "

- have a cadre of counselors to work with minorities,
- adequately fund and staff Minority Services, where orientation to registration procedures, financial assistance opportunities and the like are readily available from well-trained staff,
- develop a Minority Studies Core Program (Many participants feel that all cultures should be studied with an emphasis on multicultural understanding), and
- review the course content of the university's Alaska history classes.

" *Accurate American/Alaska History Course Content* "

Alaska Natives had experienced some confusion or confrontation (or both) when taking classes on Alaska history. "The history department at UAA rejects any Native input in class." The faculty says "if it's not written down then it's not valid." "But we know, our grandparents lived then and told us."

One student said he "got pissed off" when a history teacher there refused to listen or believe his stories about Alaska history which differed from the text. "They say you're somebody that you are not because they think certain people came from certain regions!"

" *Better Support Systems For Women and Single Parents* "

UAA should address the concerns of women and single parents by setting up a support system center where they could meet, where mothers could tend to and nurse their babies and where helpful lectures or discussion groups could be held.

Anchorage Residents' Needs From the Anchorage Business Community

Here the participants focused on access to jobs and promotions, discrimination based on stereotyping, and on the needs of women in the work force. They suggested: -

" *Better Multicultural Awareness* "

- making access to jobs more equitable by training and hiring personnel to recognize the skills and experiences of "different" people, those with English language deficiencies in particular, and to overcome stereotyping and pre-judgement;
- having minority-language-speaking people in banks, courts, police, etc., to help people to understand unfamiliar systems;

" *More Job Training and English Language Courses* "

- developing apprenticeship programs. (Such programs are widely used throughout Germany, Switzerland and Austria.)

The business community could consider offering courses in English as a second language (ESL) as part of their on-the-job training. Poor English appears to be a real handicap. Consider the young Asian who commented. "I have 4 or 5 diplomas in special training but can't get a job because of my accent and poor English pronunciation."

" *More Support Systems* "

- providing safe, affordable and convenient child care facilities for working parents.

Programs That Are Working

At this point, one might well ask the question, "Is anything being done right?" In many instances, residents cited satisfactory experiences and special programs they say are working well:

* Work/study programs
* On-the-job training
* The North Slope Borough (has an Alaskan Native principal and staff)
* Head Start (but overcrowded)
* Child Care Connection
* The Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) "But its lost its funding."
* Bilingual education "if executed right"
* Klatt Elementary Indian Education Program
* Alaska Specialized Education Training Service (ASETS)
* New Dawn (Alaska Women's Resource Center)
* Breakthrough
* Sensitive and caring teachers
* Montessori-based programs (but overcrowded)

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Focus Group Research: African Americans

On August 22 and September 12, 1991, Craciun and Associates conducted focus group research for the Winning With Stronger Education (WISE) project. Participants were African American women and men. The objectives of the study were to determine the kinds of experiences the participants and their children were having with education in Anchorage and their expectation for the future.

PART I: SUMMARY

The African American women were well-educated, all having gone beyond high school with some formal education in college or in a trade. The men had some college experience except for one. They lived in neighborhoods of predominantly African Americans, Alaskan Natives, and Whites. Their mean age was forty-six. They were articulate and knowledgeable, determined to be a force for change in education.

A. Foremost Problem

Frustration is a major concern for these African Americans. Their profiles cite rejection or discrimination in the work force and condescension from the schools. Among the frustrations are difficulties with getting loans or credit, being overlooked for promotions, and lack of encouragement. The condescension from the schools includes being "told not to worry" about their children's problems and "just passing children through school."

In contrast to the black women, however, the black men seem much more optimistic about the opportunities currently available to them to advance their economic future, attain the knowledge (not necessarily education) they need and to influence their children's education. Their comments focused on changing themselves, "developing" themselves rather than on changing the system.

B. Hopelessness

These participants reported a feeling of integration into the Anchorage Community. No hopelessness was indicated in this group. Anger and aggressiveness gave notice that they intend to be both seen and heard regarding changes in the educational system.

C. Parental Involvement with Schools

In varying degrees, all the women were involved with the schools. One mother visits the schools "when there're problems," but the rest participate actively. None of the men had children in Anchorage.

A number of additional verbatim comments should be recorded here. Those from men are separate because they reflect a different orientation, dealing only with their own experiences in school.

Women:

Generally there's a dropping off of success about the third or fourth grade or so.
Teachers seem afraid of black students as they get older - - about fourth or fifth grade.
Black male students are treated differently. (All expressed agreement.)
Our culture is not reflected accurately or sufficiently in the history books.
During Black History month, whites portray black characters. It's one-sided.
Some of the teaching of Black History is being done at home, but some parents don't know it themselves and some don't have time.
All teachers should be educated in Black History as it is.

Men:

We are going to home school our daughter until maybe high school in order to see she receives discipline and that she has values.

I had no strong male [no matter what color] role model growing up. I had trouble acting like an individual man. I had no self-esteem.

Kids need a challenge.

It is interesting to note that the black men were the only interviewees in all the focus groups to feel that "teaching for jobs" should not be the primary goal of education. They stressed self-development and "finding the right vehicle to get you where you want to go." While the women see the system as the primary source of help, the men see themselves at the root of change.

D. Solutions to Problems

Participants considered next what would make it easier for them to get into the system and what services the community should provide to help them. There was no dearth of materials from this lively group. Their comments covered a wide range of subjects:

Child Care: "Necessary but Child Care Assistance has had a funding cut.

J.T.P.A.: Two or three thought this a good service, "but JTPA has lost its funding."

Welfare: "The State breeds welfare. They should have a program to train people for jobs and an employment outlet and child care."

"Have a state-funded program to pay people to get out of the welfare office into training and come out into a job already lined up."

Schools: "Start in junior high to work with the child on finding out what he or she wants to do and how to get there."

"ASD should make it possible for me to get into the job for which I'm qualified." (She had worked at the District and was passed over for promotion.)

"Hire more minority teachers, but not just token teachers." (The group supported the population/teacher racial percentage ratio.)

Teach American history which accurately reflects the role and experience of African Americans.

"Minority counseling is needed at UAA."

E. Final Comments

To finalize the discussion, each participant was asked to state briefly one thing he or she thought Anchorage could do to improve the quality of its education.

"Teach people a career."

"Have cooperative school/business education starting in elementary school and on-the-job training. Business should help the school district develop curriculum."

"Improve the counseling system." (This participant named five schools in which she felt counseling was deficient.)

"Have more black people as role models."

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"Have qualified teachers and the same supplies and equipment in all schools. Some schools get more than others."
"We need more good teachers and school programs integrated with every race."
"Establish discipline. Have some people working just with parents and relaying information to the school. Gangs and bullies need control."
"America is failing because we don't give kids rights and wrongs; kids are confused, and our future looks like chaos."
"Give kids a challenge."

A final comment deserves space: "We do not want our children lost in the cracks, but we can't always come to school and check on everything. We have to be out there working to survive."

PART II: EXPERIENCES OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN WITH EDUCATION

The profiles which follow are selected for illumination; they may not reflect the entire group composition.

Visits When There Are Problems

One participant goes to UAA to keep up her typing, English, Math, etc.. She had a job at Providence Hospital but felt her trainer (on computers) was "sabotaging me."

This mother has six children, all in Anchorage schools. She visits the schools "when there are problems."

" Now I need a small business loan and I can't get it. "

Another participant, who had twenty-five years of experience Outside in a federal job, tried to transfer to Anchorage. "They accepted my transfer until they saw me - - over thirty and black. I fought for three years for equal opportunity and then gave up and went back to UAA for five years and got a business degree. I couldn't get unemployment. I couldn't even get a lawyer to help me. Now I need a small business loan and can't get it." All the banks have refused her loans.

" Don't just pass the child through school. "

One mother wanted to take a computer class but could not get in because she had not used her typing for ten years, and it was rusty. She had to take a bank job, but what she really wants is to get a teaching certificate and teach computer classes. She wants to open a business but says, "You can t get credit if you don't have credit."

She has two children. Her daughter is enrolled in an optional program because the mother likes its structure and what is learned. The black minority ratio at the school is "about one to fifty." The mother is involved and voices her opinions. "However, when I saw problems developing, I was just told not to worry." We're told, "Don't worry about the child's math, science if he or she is writing well. It's like this one area's going to carry them through life" (expressed agreement from several participants).

She sent her son to a Montessori school. The little boy felt his mother should be with him; he was shy and uncertain. The mother feels he is not getting what he needs in sixth grade. She favors "testing for possible problems and then pushing a bit." "Don't just pass the child through school."

" They said I didn't fit... "

Having had one year of college and having taken several short courses, one mother worked at Alascom as a "Girl Friday" and "even taught newcomers," but she never got a promotion. "They said I didn't fit, didn't get along with people." "the clique will find a way to get you - - each will lie to cover his own skin." "I would like to go into Sociology. I'll be going back to school."

As the mother of twelve, this participant has experienced many problems from the time of enrolling her first child in school. She told of her overly tall daughter's being passed "just to get her out of class." "They didn't know what to do with her. She was ridiculed and humiliated."

The mother visits school often and says "We have to fight for our kids." (Much agreement was expressed by the others present.)

" Why should I work for five dollars an hour when I'm worth more? "
This participant experienced a lack of encouragement in the ENT program at UAA. She wants to work at API. "Why should I work for five dollars an hour when I'm worth more?" "I'll find out what's available. I'll try Older Persons Action Group or something."

She has two boys in school. She is a teacher's aide and encourages her children to do well. She cites overcrowded classrooms and not liking the teaching her children are getting. She was not specific.

" Frustrated with the schools. "
A grandmother and the mother of another of the participants is "frustrated with the schools." When she visited the schools, she felt she was listened to but that "there was not a whole lot of results." She thinks the Montessori schools are overcrowded.

Home School Until High School
One participant spent his early years in a segregated "Negro school" where his experience was "very good." In eighth grade he was integrated into a predominantly white school. The experience proved traumatic and his grades fell. He was the only black in three of his classes and felt isolated. A lack of challenge at home further complicated his attempts to succeed in high school. Having no father and no role model, he was not motivated to succeed.

Following high school he joined the military and just recently got out. He and his wife are determined to "home school" their one-year-old daughter "until maybe high school" in order to ensure that she receives discipline and has values. His wife and her mother and grandmother have college degrees.

" My first F. "
Another participant, single with no children, had attended predominantly black, but not segregated, public schools through junior high. When he moved to Anchorage, he attended East High, experiencing culture shock and "my first F." The stress of change and the decline of his self-esteem in classes led him to become more introverted and "into jock things," where he was a good athlete and made friends. While at East he excelled in a few of the college preparatory classes but was not encouraged to pursue the full college prep curriculum. He attended UAA and UAF, obtaining a "degree in petroleum," mostly as "a favor to my parents."

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Focus Group Research: Asian Americans

On August 24, 1991, Craciun and Associates conducted focus group research for the Winning With Stronger Education (WISE) project. Participants were Asian Americans, with equal numbers of men and women attending.

PART I: SUMMARY

The Asian Americans had a mean age of thirty-two, were articulate, all married but one, and well-educated. All but one were high school graduates with six having some college or trade education and two with college degrees.

A. Foremost Problem

This group faced the problem of overcoming a popular misconception, that they are just "kitchen workers." They often entered the job market below their level of experience and education. In addition, since they learned English from Asians who were often not fluent in English, their accents and pronunciations worked against them. They see the lack of correct English as the primary barrier to their moving ahead.

B. Hopelessness

Although frustrated by many of their experiences with job entry and in the work place, the Asian Americans evidenced no hopelessness. Instead they spoke repeatedly of upgrading their skills and "proving" themselves. This group had a strong sense of community and explained how they all work together for each to succeed.

C. Solutions to Problems

The Asian Americans are not overly critical of Anchorage's educational offerings. They feel that those with the expertise probably know what they are doing. They are relatively new to this country and still see it as offering them a better way of life. Some of their suggestions follow:

"With more and more to learn, education needs to consider what a child <u>needs</u> vs. what is extraneous."

Schools need to take more responsibility on the language issue. "Let children have some say as to how to use their native language."

Most of the group support the teaching of foreign languages beginning before grade three or in junior high school. One father, however, felt adjustment should not keep the child in a bilingual pattern. "Offer a foreign language when it is needed for employment."

"Provide constant, accurate feedback on what's going on with the child in school."

"Establish cultural diversity classes." "More open-mindedness, kindness, and patience should be required." "Treat everyone as a person."

All employers should create continuous training and development programs for their employees - - whatever they can afford - - for new and existing employees.

D. Final Comments

The participants were very much involved with the education of their children, and they felt welcome in the schools. One woman, however, found school/parent communications unsatisfactory: "I found out my son had taken the bus to school but had not been attending classes. He had twenty-seven absences, and I had not been notified."

Several parents cited bilingual programs as helpful. One man commented that he and his wife felt they had been fortunate with bilingual teachers: "It makes a big difference." A woman pointed to her bilingual training as helping considerably in high school. But another woman said she worked so hard to learn English that sheforgot her Japanese and could no longer converse with her parents!

PART II: EXPERIENCES OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN WITH EDUCATION

The profiles which follow are selected for illumination; they may not reflect the entire group composition.

" You were closer to the teachers...at ACC "

One participant who came from Thailand has been in Anchorage nineteen years. He was educated at ACC and UAA. "The college (ACC) had the best education for the foreign student or minority. There was more help, even to a minority group that had a disadvantage. You were closer to the teachers and didn't have to deal with the big system. There was job training." For the last fourteen years he's been at ATU where on-the-job training is offered. He has eight children, some in Christian schools, some in public schools. The oldest is going into the first year of college.

" Can't get a job because of my accent. "

A young man with no children came from Thailand, graduated from Dimond High and went to UAF. He would like to be " in flying." "I'm looking for work, but I need to take more courses first. I have four or five diplomas in special training but can't get a job because of my accent and poor English pronunciation."

Bilingual Teachers Make a Big Difference.

Another participant has been in Anchorage fifteen years. He is from the Philippines. He thought his army training was good. After leaving the army, he joined ARCO. He is especially enthusiastic about ARCO's on-the-job training. "They have trainers all over the place, even in the field, along the pipeline."

He has three children: in college, in grade school, and entering school. He and his "wife mostly" visit the schools and are satisfied with the welcome they receive: "No complaints." They feel they have been fortunate with bilingual teachers: "It makes a big difference."

Ready For School But May Not Be Able To Go

One man has been in Anchorage nine years: he came from Thailand where he had "mostly sales jobs." He got into the system, worked hard, and was promoted and sent to managerial school in Seattle, after which he worked a couple of years as district manager before establishing his own business - a Thai kitchen.

His three children were all born in Anchorage. He goes to school for conferences and feels he is treated "okay." The parents had a problem with the cut-off date for entering school as all three of their children were born in September. They feel their youngest child, one year behind his brother who passed on skills while playing with him, is more than ready for school but may not go because of his birth date. They see the need to test for exceptions.

" I got the job by behaving like a dumb Asian. "

One interviewee came to Anchorage from the Philippines "via Hawaii" in 1987. "I got a job with ARCO. I got the job by behaving like a dumb Asian. But when I got the job, I showed them what I could do. I had the job seven months and then was offered a job as a welder" (with another company).

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" He had a difficult time receiving any input from me. "

One Asian has been in Anchorage for four years and is a graduate of West High. She came from the Philippines. She has no children but is caring for a foster child. She was in a practicum at the university and was then asked to sub for one month. She proved herself and fourteen months later became a supervisor. "I had to adjust my way of speaking to that of seven Caucasians." She felt something was "not right" in her relationship with her Caucasian employer but was not sure if the cause was that she was a woman or a minority. "I had been there as a supervisor for some time when he came. He had a difficult time receiving any input from me." (The boss had similar problems, she said, with Caucasian employees.) She found she had to deal with the Caucasian culture - "socialize while you work." In her culture one "did the work first and then socialized."

" My teachers communicated more with me... because I spoke English. "

Six years ago this female participant came to Anchorage. "I was in a bilingual program and all that." "At Dimond High the teachers communicated more with me than my parents because I spoke English. I went into a paralegal program at Charter College and worked with hands-on computer while I was in school."

She Forgot Her Japanese

Four years ago another participant came to Anchorage from the Philippines. She has a daughter, six, and is involved with the school, even to working in the classroom. She has had no negative experiences to speak of. She did comment that she knows of only one elementary school that offers Japanese in an early grade. She herself can no longer communicate with her parents in her native language because, in working so hard to learn English, she forgot her Japanese.

Twenty-Seven Absences And No Notice.

A native Korean but a long-time Alaskan found in the workforce that "another man's education is seen as more valuable than my experience for nine years on-the-job, he told me, 'I have a college education; I know more than you.' "

She had an unfortunate experience in finding that her son had taken the bus to school but had not been attending classes. He had twenty-seven absences about which the parent had not been notified.

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Focus Group Research: Hispanics

On August 24, 1991 and September 15, 1991, Craciun and Associates conducted focus group research for the Winning With Stronger Education (WISE) project. Participants were Hispanics.

PART I: SUMMARY

The Hispanics, groups of men and women with a mean age of 34, ranged from college graduates to non-English-speaking participants. Four translators (one a participant as well) were in attendance at the second session. The groups were divided on the basis of those who had children with experiences in Anchorage schools and those who did not. A facilitator led a small group discussion with the latter group regarding their needs for education and training in Anchorage.

As the moderator described the agenda, the Hispanic participants applauded her and the WISE Project for giving them the opportunity to express their feelings and offer suggestions. "Hispanics aren't usually asked for opinions."

A. Foremost Problem

All agreed that learning English was the top educational priority both now and in the future.

Hispanic Americans feel their pleas and suggestions have fallen on deaf ears in the past. ("Will this study make anything different?" asks one man.) They refer to an impenetrable white superstructure.

In citing poor communication, one man spoke of a publication which addressed "exploiting cultural diversity," rather than "exploring" or "explaining" cultural diversity and pointed out that such semantic carelessness creates even more problems. Another asked, "What is the percentage of white teachers? If they are so 'qualified,' why are we having so many problems?"

B. Hopelessness

Frustration rather than hopelessness was the hallmark for these groups. They recognized a need and intend to play a part in fulfilling that need.

C. Solutions to Problems

Schools

More minority teachers are needed. The percentage of ethnic groups in the school populations is a reasonable base. " We need an accurate reflection in the classroom of what the world is like."

Have Hispanics in every school to help settle problems.
Involve parents in decisions to place children in bilingual classes.
"The Spanish community is requesting phonics."
Provide more incentives for adult schooling or training. Bring down the costs.
Have timely communication between schools and parents.

Business

Make child care available.
Racism is subliminal, especially in hiring, and must be eliminated. "We may be hired just because it looks good forthe company. That's not good either."
"Businesses should enable you to have time to do things for the community. One must develop the urge to help both himself and the community."
Businesses have to see that people/workers have families too!

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Overall

This country, Alaska, Anchorage - - they all need to come to grips with themselves and their history as tyrants in their treatment of minorities.

Espousing equality does not make equality.
People need sensitizing.
Forget our accents and recognize us for what we are.
Spanish History Week does absolutely nothing to add to knowledge of our culture. It just deals with food and clothing.
We need to look at ourselves as a country, not as a collection of ethnic groups. Look at the whole spectrum of people.
"People need to be incorporated, not to be studied from the outside. Dialogue is important."

Final Comments

In answering the question "What can Anchorage do?", the Hispanic Americans recommended the following:

Reject racism
Have more action programs like Head Start. Begin at a young age.
Have minority culture programs in the curriculum.
Connect kids with adults who can help them.
Develop an office which disseminates information on the educational process and on opportunities in education or for training - - an education consulting office.
Establish fair hiring systems so more minorities receive promotions and can reach administrative positions. (Examine the credentials vs. experience question.)
Help us learn English.

PART II: EXPERIENCES OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN WITH EDUCATION

The profiles which follow are selected for illumination; they may not reflect the entire group composition.

" Not getting the things I think he should. "

One participant came from Guatemala City. She has two years towards a degree, was "moving quickly," but her husband is in college now. She will go back when her husband is finished. "Right now I'm stagnated." She chose the computer field but didn't always get the training she needed. She wants a broad-based college education but is "scared away by the price." She needs child care, too. Most of her information about jobs came from school.

This lady rejects "being treated differently." She has a son who is "excelling" in third grade in the alternate program at Susitna. She goes to the school once or twice a month and feels welcome. She has encountered no communication problems with the school because she has learned to "tone down myself." She feels her son needs to be pushed to do what he can and that he is "not getting from school the things I think he should."

" The School District knows me quite well. "

This participant, a preschool teacher, has been eleven years in Anchorage. He feels Anchorage has offered him many experiences. He worked in Head Start but reached a dead end in advancement. "They found I wasn't qualified because I did not have the proper credentials, no college degree. I had put the application for the Head Start program into Spanish - - even to the lettering on the clothing in the picture. They buried it." "I went to APU but had to leave because of the expense." This bilingual teacher is now working in the Montessori program. "It seems like every dead end has led to something else."

He has made contacts through his preschool teaching. He "crosses groups" and learns about types and availability of jobs. "I went through Montessori training and was very pleased. My supervisor based everything on experience rather than credentials." "I am still trying to get a degree."

A single parent, the participant has a nine-year-old son, half Native, who is being educated in Anchorage. The father has had him in different schools to get what he wants for him. He feels the child had a bad experience with the ABC school on Northern Lights because it was so "militaristic." However, " there are some good nurturing teachers out there." His son's teacher at Inlet View," he says, "sends home reports focusing on the positive."

The child is doing well. He particularly liked the multicultural summer program which resembled a summer camp more than a school. The father is an involved parent: "The School District knows me quite well. It is frustrating to come back again and again with concerns which are not addressed."

"I wish there were more Alaska Native culture programs in the curriculum."

" What has Anchorage done for me? It's frustrated me... "

A member of the group reports none of his schooling was in Anchorage. He heard of the GI Bill from fellow Vietnam veterans. He took the GED and the ACT and had a 3.8 average after the first year of college. He initiated the ASD Minority Leadership Conference. He asks, "What has Anchorage done for me? It's frustrated me as an activist for minorities, particularly Hispanic." The participant has been on School District committees which he feels were largely disregarded.

There are six children in this family, ranging from the oldest, who served in the Gulf, to the youngest, entering kindergarten. The father has" lots of contact with schools." For his son, eleven, in sixth grade, he feels expectations are too low. His daughter, who is learning to read, is "not getting phonics." He feels his oldest son needed positive reinforcement which he didn't get at Bartlett. The boy ran into racism in high school and lost interest in school except in football. "He aced out math, etc., then went into the military." The father feels communication between parents and schools is very important. "A year after my son left high school, the computer called up and said he was missing classes!"

" Discrimination based on her inability to speak English. "

A woman who has one child currently attending school is working as a night janitor at UAA. She has taken English classes at the university and has received job related training (day care administration) from Child Care Connection. Her experience in all cases was "difficult, but good." In most situations she could find someone to provide Spanish translation, but the language barrier was still the cause of her difficulties. She understood most of the moderator's questions without translation but never responded in English. She was hesitant to say she was discriminated against, but did believe that there was "discrimination based on her inability to speak English."

" People treat you like you're dumb. "

One of the translators was anxious to present her own experiences. She has one child in elementary school and she has taken several computer courses in Anchorage. She "works office jobs" and due to this experience felt strongly that language training "is not good enough to get a good job." She spoke out frequently in support of job (especially computer) training and community education designed to eliminate discrimination against Hispanic people. "English language vocabulary and vowels are very hard" and if you speak with an accent, or cannot speak English very well, "people treat you like you're dumb."

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" Taken advantage of because I don't speak English. "

One woman in the group moved to Anchorage in 1985. She is a child care provider and felt "taken advantage of because I do not speak English." She has not been paid for extra time children have been left with her, but she felt this was a "communication problem rather than outright discrimination." (Others in the group felt it was clearly discrimination.) She did not appear to understand much English and spoke none. This participant has a daughter who is in elementary school. The mother has not taken any classes in Anchorage.

Never Consulted About Special Classes.

One woman's son had "a bilingual teacher for one year and that was a fine, beautiful experience for him." His English improved and she felt that in his second year (third grade) he should have been integrated into the mainstream classes with "American teachers." In fact, her son was instead put in "special" classes again and she "was never consulted!" This angered her. She "do(es) not believe that kids should be all treated the same. Each child should be treated differently and not separated out just because of his being Hispanic." "Parents know if their child is doing well" and should be consulted. Everyone agreed with her.

System Responsive With Extra Effort.

A couple with two children had a similar bad experience with their son. Both parents went to the school and due to their influence he was kept in the "special class only in first grade." They believe that class was better for him his first year "because he gets extra attention by the teachers," but even though they still have problems with their son they do not want him in the "slower class." The father felt the teachers did not like talking to him, but preferred to talk to his wife. He is not currently working so he goes up often and "talks strongly." He feels the system is responsive to him with this extra effort, but they agree that the school district does not initiate communication with them.

" Special classes since 1985! "

One mother has a daughter who has been kept in "special class since 1985!" She did not understand why her daughter was not doing better. She was disappointed and confused by this. Although she said that "teachers listened" to her, she did not understand why her daughter had been kept in special classes. She appeared frustrated and disappointed in the school system.

Need More Hispanic Teachers.

The other two mothers in the group felt the school had been "good" for their kids and that the teachers had been "no problem" to talk with. They did agree that the bilingual classes were "slower" than the regular classes but the kids' "English was definitely improving" and that seemed most important to them. All agreed that there are "not many Hispanic teachers" and that they would like there to be more. They did not think there had to be as many Hispanic teachers as kids, because their kids "are Americans and they should be taught by Americans."

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Focus Group Research: Alaska Natives

On August 26 and September 17, 1991, Craciun and Associates conducted focus group research at the Alaska Tribal Council Building for the Winning With Stronger Education (WISE) project. The participants were Alaska Natives.

PART I: SUMMARY

The Alaska Natives were a group of women and men, with a mean age of forty-one. All were high school graduates with some college or trade training. Two were college graduates; four had some post-graduate work. All met the criteria for low income (under $30,000/year). The group was forthcoming and articulate. They were particularly open and emotional in telling their stories, as can be seen in the representative profiles in Part II.

A. Foremost Problem

Dominant in the minds of this group is their invisibility; "It's as if there isn't a place for Alaska Natives." They find the Anchorage School District, the university system, and the community insensitive, unresponsive and condescending. They feel the school system is letting their children down. State and local political leadership, they say, is irresponsible in not recognizing that the indigenous people of Alaska are not second-class citizens.

B. Hopelessness

Bordering on hopelessness, the Alaska Natives displayed deep frustration. They pled for understanding, for recognition, for a place in the structure of their state, and, above all, for action. Their sense of heritage is strong, but they feel it slipping away. However, they displayed at times a fighting, determined spirit which indicated they were not yet beaten.

When the moderator asked about the "well known systems of representation" Alaskas Natives have (such as AFN, Native corporations), the group unanimously proclaimed that "the Native corporations and AFN are part of the problem!" "They are political only." "They're interested only in business and the money they make."

C. Problems With the Schools

Anchorage School District

Problems are not caught early so the students get farther and farther behind. (But they are passed on anyway.)
Testing for learning disabilities is not done for Native children.
Parents are made to feel their children's problems are the result of the parents' inadequacies.
Traditional mores of the people are ignored; parents are not oriented to the practices of the District as opposed to their own expectations. For instance, in the village the teacher comes to the home to discuss a child's school problems with the parents.
Nothing is done when a child starts failing. "There is nothing in place to stop decline."
Available and qualified Natives are not being hired by the Anchorage School District.
Bilingual education, if instituted right, is effective. It's not done right in the Anchorage School District.

University of Anchorage, Alaska

I attended the University of Alaska one and a half semesters. I will not go back. I felt out of place.
There is no recognition for women or single parents at UAA. And they're everywhere.
There are Native courses but no core programs, no Alaska Native Studies Program.
The housing policy is discriminatory.

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Native Student Services is understaffed.
UAA disseminates false information about Natives. In one of its Introduction to Education classes, Natives were referred to as all dying from drinking too much.
There's one counselor for 600-plus Native students at UAA..
There are thirty-five in my daughter's Geometry class! Her friends are teaching her. I want teachers teaching my kids.

D. Solutions to Problems

Anchorage School District

Be more sensitive to the onset of problems; test, if necessary, for learning disabilities and have counselors check early with the parents. The parents are not always aware that they may visit or contact the schools. They are culturally oriented to being contacted.
Have Native counselors or counselors familiar with the Native culture in all schools.
Hire available, qualified Natives as teachers and role models.
Work to build the self-esteem of Native students and their parents. This would include sessions on cultural diversity for both students and staff and more sensitive and caring relationships with parents.
Try team teaching to ease pressure on teachers to know everything.
Allow parents some say in hiring teachers.
Expand opportunities for enrollment in optional schools; the waiting lists are too long.
Bring elders into the schools.

University of Alaska, Anchorage

Improve the attitude of the university towards Natives. Hire Native counselors. Provide orientation to the system on a more personal basis and provide ongoing fully staffed Native services.
Eliminate discrimination in housing.
Establish an Alaska Native Studies Program.
Educate the faculty in sensitivity.
Be more welcoming to women and single parents.

A Model Program

"There is one model we can look at. Probably 85% of it is good. One school (North Slope) has a Native woman in charge. They recruit and hire Native teachers and spend a lot of time and effort gearing toward indigenous people. The things the leader is promoting are positive. All bilingual native teachers have the status of certified teachers." "They make provisions for the Native people."

PART II: EXPERIENCES OF PARENT AND CHILDREN WITH EDUCATION

The profiles which follow are selected for illumination; they may not reflect the entire group composition.

Dramatic Differences from Klatt to Mountain View

This man has no children of his own in the Anchorage School District, but his girlfriend has three children at Klatt Elementary. He described their experiences as "great." "They love it!" He especially liked the active Indian education program there, but felt confident that it "was a lot more active than in other parts of the city, like Mountain View."

The participant is three credits short of an Elementary Education degree from UAF because "they will not accept his D in Algebra." "It took four months to hear from them!" He is petitioning for a special exception due to the fact that he only plans to teach the lower elementary grades. He knows of other people who have been allowed special exception, and he is hopeful that if he sends his petition through a second time it will be approved.

He focused on "overcrowding" and "not enough teachers in public schools" as his primary concerns, but his real frustration (and that of the rest of the group) centered on discrimination. He felt that the problem with overcrowding was dealt with unfairly "depending on cultural diversity (socioeconomic status) and family life." He specifically focused on the differences in Klatt and Mountain View schools. "Family life is a lot different on the Hillside." Opportunities for Indian education, other special programs and better facilities are all available to his girlfriend's kids at Klatt, but not available in Mountain View. He pointed to the reputation "known all over the state" of Mountain View as a high crime and low-income section of town and felt that this influences the city and state when budgeting for the schools.

"I never knew I could talk to the teacher."

One participant was stunned to find in the eleventh grade that her pregnancy meant she could not remain in school. In Native culture, a pregnancy is welcomed. It was welcomed by her family; she had "all kinds of support." "I was a good student, but I was told, 'Go back to the village'. An Indian Education counselor connected me with Stellar. I flew through Stellar. I was proud of earning my degree at Stellar. But when I graduated I was listed as a graduate of SAVE. I only took one course at SAVE - photography. I don't know how it happened. I don't even want to know."

She has a dyslexic son, nine, and a daughter, fifteen. The son was in Anchorage for first and second grade, left, and came back for sixth grade. Her daughter at that time was in first grade at O'Malley. "Where we were she was tested all over the place as bright and gifted. We brought the tests here for the sixth grade. The ASD wanted to do the tests all over again." The daughter felt the tests she had had should be accepted and rejected further testing. "I honored her decision." She had a wonderful sixth grade at O'Malley; she was a model Native child in seventh grade, but in the eighth grade at Mears, problems arose. There were kids who didn't like Natives, who felt Natives were "in control." Her grades were A's and F's, depending on the classes. She left: she never passed eighth grade. But they passed her on to the ninth. We just got the letter the other day. (This was 8/25/91). "My daughter wants to drop out. She just doesn't like Mears. She came from a village of sixty students to a school of 840 kids. She thinks they should have Native schools, like Mount Edgecombe, closer to home.

"My son was very quiet. The last day of school I went to pick up his report card and was told, 'He did pretty good for someone from the village.' He had wonderful teachers in second grade." "I never knew I could talk to the teacher; if I had known that before, it would have been different for my daughter." "IT'S A DIFFERENT WAY."

Sensitivity is Missing.

Another participant says, "I was a product of my own tribal people. In tribal education we have no problems. I went to New York and went through the culture shock there and dropped out. There are positive things here, but we need qualified Native teachers in the District. Sensitivity is missing. We need role models and those who know our problems."

One of this parent's two children made it through the system for nine and a half years. "My frustrations were not so much from an ethnic point of view as from the academic." The mother said she was so much a part of the system for so long. She believed in authority; she kept quiet. She thought "those with degrees" had the know-how to recognize and deal with problems. "They didn't. My son was tested high - 96 percentile. I went to all the conferences and was told 'Your son's a very nice boy, BUT...!' I left school crying; I went home crying. It was like "There's something wrong with you." "Here was a bright boy not doing well. He struggled through all those years. School was frustrating. There was no testing for a learning disability or anything like that. I couldn't make suggestions because I didn't know. I took the 'old mom' route - - 'Buckle down,' you know."

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The other child is now five, a Down's syndrome son. The mother visited the school and was repeatedly told, "Your child does not mind." She said, "He minds at home, and he minded at day care." His first year was evidently centered around potty-training. "They didn't succeed." His second year was a "wait and see" year. " 'Any day he'll be talking' sort of thing." He was rejected two years in a row for summer school; "no mentally retarded accepted." In the School District the child has "no regular kids around him like he had in day care. The original idea of summer school was to provide services so the child wouldn't regress, wouldn't lose any acquired skills." This is a very frustrated parent: "THEY DON'T HEAR ME!"

"I personified the typical Native, I never spoke in school. I never said 'Boo'. I participated in school. I worked in school. But I didn't feel as though I belonged."

Rebel with a Cause

This parent earned an A.A. degree in California and attended Alaska Pacific University. He is within four courses of a Business Degree in Marketing Management. "I'm being treated okay at APU. Hey, I'm a Vietnam Veteran. I'm not rolling over for anybody." He is so angry and frustrated that he produced copies of school district reports and manuals, the Grand Jury Report on the Satch Carlson case, etc., slammed them on the table and said, "This is where the problem is." "I've been called a rebel. Fine, I love it. I've been working on the school system since 1976."

The family has four children, three in school. The parent feels the School District is "a bunch of racist bigots." We've been arguing "All minority students are simply being passed on and may be short of credits at graduation." He has a first grade student at Mountain View Elementary, the last school to remove asbestos and wanted to know why parents were not warned of the danger to their children."All other schools were notified in 1984. All major white schools had already addressed the problem. Why is reporting to parents so slow?" He does go to the school to talk to teachers and to the School Board. He is angry and militant, and he intends to be recognized and to effect changes.

" My heart bleeds for these kids. "

Childless but with a number of nieces and nephews, this interviewee said, "Their experiences have been very negative." "The treatment is less than human." "Three only made the seventh grade. They weren't recognized; they weren't interested in school. There was so much discrimination by teachers and principals." The parents reported to the teachers and the principals in grade school, but the bad treatment continued. Would the parents move them? No. "There's no sense in moving around; you're not going to change your color moving around."

"I applied for a job in the District. I had a friend call and ask if there were any Alaskan Natives on the applications. The answer was 'No.' I knew I was there so I went to the District to see my file and was told I'd have to go through the Superintendent. So I knew they were playing games. I started looking and found other Alaska Natives with all their credentials in place. I worked with others and even went as far as the School Board. I was labeled a troublemaker. I've been told, recently, 'There is no record of your student teaching. We are questioning your credentials.' " "I go to in-service tomorrow, and there'll be 10,000 people looking over my shoulder to see if I can walk on water. I have no intention of being the sacrificial lamb."

"My heart bleeds when I see these kids. I weep for these kids. I pick them up out of the gutter. I dropped out of school. I left high school. I was attractive, and all the male teachers wanted to go to bed with me. With all the life left in me, I'm going to fight for our students." (Several people clapped after this assertion.)

" It's not good. "

Another parucipant has four children, "none of whom, thank heavens, were in Anchorage schools." "The system is racist: it's prejudiced. I have friends who have children in school, and it's not good." "WISE should be coming to us, not us here, explaining things to you nevertheless it may eradicate some of the wrongs in the system."

She was sixteen when she came to Anchorage in 1981 after running away from home. "I wanted to go to high school. I had been in an American Indian Heritage High School in Seattle. A counselor here recommended I get my GED and go from there. I got my GED. I wanted to go to college, and the same counselor told me, 'You're not really college material.' I went to ACC a year and attended UAA one and a half semesters. I felt out of place; I will not go back. I graduated from a clerical vocational training school: it means nothing. Six thousand dollars and six months, and I can't use it. I'm working as a front desk clerk. I worked my way from a maid to the front desk."

She has three children, one in grade three. "Seems like up until last year I was teaching her more at home than at school (Government Hill). I went and talked to them a lot, and they said, ' She's doing fine; she's doing fine,' yet she couldn't read in second grade. We moved to Fairview last year. The teacher and I worked together. Like in one school year we brought her up two years. She was a white teacher. She took a hell of an interest: I noticed she really gave an extra helping hand to minorities." "I can t begin to talk about how bad I feel about Government Hill." She wishes she could stay with the helpful, caring teacher all the way through.

" I grieve for my daughter... "

A woman who has "been a teacher five years" has decided to become certified in elementary education because "most of our teachers are hired out of state. Whites don't know how Native Alaskans think." She had one daughter, an honor roll student before coming to Anchorage. "A couple of months after she came here, she suddenly started to fail. What did the school district do when my daughter started failing? There was nothing done. The school should have known something was wrong. She quit going to school. People erroneously felt that someone from the District would go to the home to confer with parents. That's what would have happened back home. This was before I knew people who knew how to buck the system. No one ever called me. I had to call in. There's a good counselor, but only one for all those students. She tried to keep my daughter in school." When asked where her daughter is today, the parent simply replied, "She was murdered; but if the school system, just as much as the other social systems had not failed her, I feel she would be alive today. I grieve for my daughter and for other children who are not in school because of that type of system."

" You can't just treat them like a number. "

"I'm achieving what I want," says one mother, plodding along one course at a time towards a social work degree. "It's been seven years. But there is no recognition for women or single parents at UAA. And they're everywhere."

"My daughter had good experiences in grade school (Northwood). She is a trusting, private person. She is compliant. She was awarded for being a good girl. Things were okay in junior high. She had the services of special programs, but I was told she was not doing well. There was a fall-off at the high school level. She has a 2.1 GPA. When I went to school, the message was 'Something is wrong with you.' It was the same for both children. I was told 'nicely that it was just social; she should buckle down'." "What's going on at home does have to be taken into consideration. It's so much harder for them to hang on. You can't treat them just like a number."

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" I was told he was a 'horrible child' with 'something really wrong with him.' "

This participant has two children, a boy, eight, and a girl, six. Her son, a mild-mannered little boy had many problems in an unruly kindergarten class. "There were bullies in the class. The teacher used my son as a buffer; he said it calmed the other little boys down. My son came home daily crying. I went to the principal repeatedly, but she said there was nothing they could do. I hadn't known there was anything I could do. I removed him to another school for first grade. I felt the teacher was not trained enough to do her job. The problem was one of the old-time training - - she had taught forty years - - not racial. In April she told me there was a problem. I requested a test because he was not reading, and he tested borderline. The next year he went to a Slingerland school and was put into a group of 'unable to learn.' At a conference I was told he was a 'horrible child' with 'something really wrong' with him, but 'he has some great parents.' I left the room. I won't be talked to like that. I removed him to a private school, another Slingerland, and into tutoring last year. Now he is reading.""It was very expensive. I wish I could continue it, but I just don't have the money."

" I'm first generation... "

The curriculum is not relevant to our lifestyle" (lots of laughter and comments showing agreement), began this participant. "My education came through The Bureau of Indian Affairs. I was tested and given more testing, but I didn't know what for. Years later I realized I was being tested for Special Ed."

Later an in-law in California took her in hand, and she found herself enrolled in college without realizing it. "I was happy I was in college." This elderly woman commented. "I've been thinking about things: I'm first generation [to see a] jet plane; I'm first generation skyscraper; I'm the first person in all my background to drive a car, to use a refrigerator. (Lots of laughter throughout this declaration showed agreement.) All of these firsts. Don't forget our people are firsts in this type of society. It's very foreign to me.

" My little girl is going hooking. "

This participant has one daughter, a graduate of West High. The daughter was an honor student; the parent had "no parental problems with education." The parent was employed with Indian education in the school district - with a grade school - but not while her daughter was there. "She did it on her own."

"What I saw was some problem with interpretation of information. In the teachers' lounge I heard, 'Oh, my new little girl is going hooking today.' The next day - - same place, same people, 'She's still going hooking.' Some other says, 'I wonder what her mother does?!' I said, 'Hey, wait a minute. When you go hooking in Alaska, you're going fishing.' I say, 'If you have a question, come and ask me.' I was the only Native on a staff of seventy, classified, not certified. It was bad in terms of imbalance then, and it's bad now."

Focus Group Research: Gay and Lesbian Parents

On August 29 and September 29, 1991, Craciun and Associates conducted focus group research for the Winning With Stronger Education (WISE) project. Participants were gay and lesbian parents.

PART I: SUMMARY

The lesbian mothers were all single women with a mean age of thirty-four and income in the poverty range (under $30,000/year). They were all high school graduates with some college or trade training; one was a college graduate. Their neighborhood ethnic composition was mainly white, African American, Native Alaskan and Asian American.

The gay fathers had a mean age of thirty and income also less than $30,000/year. They all attended some college and one will graduate this year from UAA. Their neighborhood ethnic composition was similar to the lesbian mothers.

A. Foremost Problems

Although their primary concerns were child care and reforms in education at all levels, these parents cited some problems encountered because of their sexuality.

Discrimination based on their sexuality was most often traced to school district policies and PTA biases rather than to individual teachers. The lack of positive gay role models and the "invisibility" of the gay or lesbian lifestyle throughout the curriculum further added to their feelings of discrimination both towards themselves and their children.

A women preparing to go into teaching said she will hide her sexual orientation. "They need to look at me, not my sexuality. But many parents don't want their children exposed to or associating with 'that kind of person.'"

Another woman observed, "There is no getting away from a homophobic society no matter where you are. Other students keep their distance. It's intangible, an aura, but it is not in the school situation itself."

One man added that "it is important that gay parents be educated about their rights" and that they "be involved" in their child's education. In order to change the way society views homosexual parents, "especially gay men," it is essential "that we be right there with the other parents."

B. Hopelessness

These parents were activist, not defeatist. They were full of ideas for improving education in Anchorage and are actively involved. They talked more of solutions to problems than the problems themselves.

C. Solutions to Problems

For Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade

Stop giving us "the same old story: Just wait. He or she will grow into it," when our children have trouble with schooling.

There's a need for drug education and education on how to prevent pregnancies.

The system needs continuing re-evaluation of teachers. "If they don't shape up, they're out."

Let parents know about programs for the gifted. Test all kids for those programs.

Make schools more relevant to a student's life. Teach social skills. Teach formats to work out personality conflicts, to deal with crisis. Teach how to cope with life.

Get student/teacher ratio down.

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Put some responsibilities on kids: they are emerging as a "rights" group.
Teach interpersonal skills, conflict resolution, setting and adjusting priorities.
Peer counseling is good.
Teach life survival skills.
Have less fragmentation and cubbyholing in education. Show the relevancy of one area to another and expose students to other age groups.
Add positive homosexual contributions and literature to curriculum.
Add gay/lesbian mentors and speakers to programs already in place.
Redefine 'family' to include single parents and gay/lesbian couples.
Designate a counselor to deal with issues of homosexuality.
Better publicize availability of optional programs and keep the costs down so that lower income families have equal opportunity to take advantage of these programs.

University of Alaska, Anchorage

UAA needs to eliminate its Native Studies Program and its Women's Studies, etc., and incorporate the material throughout its curricula and activities "so I don't have to go to a particular class to find out about myself as a woman or as a Native."
Have affordable child care connected to UAA. All day - - every day, five days a week. Not only a drop-off while one's in class.
The three credit course at the university - -" 'How to Succeed in College' is good, but those skills - - like using the library - - should have been taught earlier."
Make UAA a friendly or welcoming place for women. There is a male bias. "One can't have self-esteem unless she has something to be esteemed about."
Continue to protect the rights of gay/lesbian students.

Business

Business can help schools with their programs. Say, perhaps, "this is valuable to us; we'll help you afford to teach it."
In business, have the "three-quarter time stuff." This is assumed to mean one quarter of the work day as released time for skill training, outside activities, community involvement, etc...
Provide education to employees and to general public about the legal rights of each employee, regardless of sexual orientation.

PART II. EXPERIENCES WITH PARENTS AND CHILDREN WITH EDUCATION

The profiles that follow are selected for illumination; they may not reflect the entire group composition.

Doing okay at UAA?

Although she classified first grade at Baxter Elementary "okay" and the third and fourth grades as "okay," as well, this parent said she had "social problems" in the fourth grade and that she "did well" until the fifth grade. In the fifth grade she "felt like there was disrespect for my person. I couldn't ask for what I needed because she'd go into an outrage; I'd get outrageous replies. The teacher wouldn't help me with my English workbook; she called my parents. None of the kids liked her anyway."

"The sixth grade was really good. I remember what I learned. The teachers were personable and respectful. Seventh was at Wendler where you needed money to be on the cheerleading squad. High school's a drag. The teachers aren't willing to listen. There are drugs all over the place." This woman became pregnant at East and couldn't go to regular high school. "It's not forbidden, but you feel ostracized. You get different treatment." Her family found Booth Memorial Home/Salvation Army Program. She is now at UAA and "doing okay." There's no discrimination or cutting off because of her sexuality. However, "UAA is not a friendly or welcoming place for women."

" I'll keep her in private schools as long as I can. "
This parent worked for UAA groundskeeping. "I quit yesterday. The white males there have a reputation for disrespect for women.They use sexual terms in a flirtatious and demeaning manner. Their behavior is indecent (patting butts, etc...)."

The young mother has a daughter, four, who has been in a day care center selected originally for its location in the Dimond area. "It's really good. They keep a record of what she does every day, and I can call up and get it. It's like being there without being there."

This fall the child will go to Tom Thumb Montessori. "It's cheaper and in the neighborhood. When she's ready for kindergarten, that's where I'll live. She's just beginning to get into academics. I'll keep her in private schools as long as I can. My concern is the public school system. My parents took no action for me so I'm taking it for my daughter."

" They need to look at me, not my sexuality. "
One participant worked at UAA as a secretary for two and a half years. Last year she started school full time. She wants a B.Ed. and to teach in the elementary or junior high area. The university has been accommodating in helping her plan. She feels she will hide her sexual orientation even though the idea "makes me feel lousy." "They need to look at me, not my sexuality." She recognizes that many parents don't want their children exposed to or associating with "that kind of person."

She attended private schools to the eighth grade and said she was "not treated like a second-class citizen intellectually. The classes were small: the teachers were not tenured." She had to repeat when she entered public school.

" I like Denali Elementary, it has kids from all over the world! "
This mother has a daughter, seventeen, and a son, ten . The daughter attended Taku but had home school a year before that. She had no problem adjusting. "I like that school," says the parent. "There's a mix of people to whom the student is exposed. The teacher ' was into being Alaskan.' " The daughter liked it. The teacher wanted teacher/parent cooperation and had a program set up for parent participation with available assignments or jobs to be done. "I went in for coaching."

When the family moved and the daughter attended O'Malley, she didn't like it. She didn't fit in. "Kids make fun of me. "She was a pretty accelerated kid" and her mom reported that she "had different interests than her peers. She explained that "we were middle class; others wore designer jeans."

Both children attended Denali for a couple of months. "This school I liked: it had not only diverse Americans but kids from all over the world." But both had to go back to O'Malley. The daughter's seventh grade was at Hanshew. She was more on an equal footing there - - in sports, honors classes. "I talked to individual teachers and principals. No one ever suggested testing. The daughter has never liked being 'academically sharp;' she tries to blend in. She's a team player. At Hanshew it was still the money thing."

The daughter settled in at West; "There's lots of diversity." " When pushed into extracurricular activities (music lessons, etc...) she felt a good deal of pressure. She had a successful PSAT and is being wooed by various colleges. The school district has been good to her - - responsive to her academic needs. Teachers gave her as much as she could take. She was never told, ' You can't do that now.' "

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With the boy, the mother doesn't know what happened in his earlier years. She was going through personal problems; "My focus was all different." "When I stepped back in, he was in Abbot Loop Elementary. Everybody there does the same thing. For two years the school insisted that any problems were a case of his sitting down and paying attention: 'He'll be okay, just wait. He'll grow into it.' He became more and more frustrated. When they started sending work to be done at home that he had not completed in class, I requested testing. His letters and numbers concepts were not coming out right. He was put into Slingerland and had to go to Northwood. When he proved not to be the only one having troubles, he excelled."

" Culture Shock "

One of the gay men, an African American, has a daughter who has lived with him and his partner for the past three years. During this time she has attended fifth through seventh grades at Turnagain, Russian Jack and Wendler. At Turnagain she "went through total culture shock." "Not only was she the only one of four African Americans, but she had to deal with her father's homosexuality as well." Both this man and his partner are "very involved" with their daughter's education, but choose to let her decide each year how "out" they will be as her parents.

He is currently enrolled at UAA and will graduate this year with a Bachelor's degree in Social Work.

" Policymakers extremely biased against homosexuals. "

Another gay father works with disabled and mentally handicapped adults. He has one daughter and is applying to "be a foster home." His partner shares equally in raising his daughter, but he is the one "most 'out' and involved with school issues." He is regularly involved in teacher conferences, school board meetings and has even testified at PTA meetings. In general, this father feels that the "younger, better educated" teachers are receptive, but "the PTA and other policymakers are extremely biased" against homosexuals.

" We went at it all semester. "

A lesbian fine arts major trying to go to school at UAA finds "there is really no program there. They have only been accredited for fine arts for two years or so and are oriented towards commercial art, which is not what I want. They have seven upper division classes you must take, but they don't have them. You must make them up. Resources are in short supply; they must be requested from Outside, and this is time-consuming. It would be hard to make a living based on all this, Art shows and festivals are in very short supply; it's prohibitive to ship back and forth. And we have only one museum. The gorgeous Fine Arts building is already overcrowded with Music, Theater and Art, plus overflowing classes from other departments. And it's non-functional for its needs - - space to rehearse for theater, to set up easels for art, etc.."

This student has had no feeling of discrimination because of her sexuality."The alternate lifestyle is probably more acceptable in the Arts."

She has had negative experiences with misogamy rather than a bias towards her sexual preference. She had two classes to discuss: An Overview of World Literature and a history course. The literature course, she said, had only one short selection by a famous woman author. The other selections were by men who spoke derogatorily about women. "The professor, a Ph.D, read the worst parts to us. I complained; he tried to flunk me. But there were enough similar complaints about such things that a Women's Studies Program was instituted. The history course was taught by a woman the first semester: she presented a well-rounded view. A man taught the second phase. (He was a tenured professor who told us he had been asked to leave a university in Texas. I don't know why. He bragged about it). There was misogynist art in the book. We went at it all semester."

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" I was impressed they noticed the need. "

Another lesbian participant has one daughter, age six, at Rogers Park Elementary, who has been in Anchorage since preschool. She was tested after the mother called about early admittance to kindergarten. Until third grade the daughter was in magnet schools, but when the family moved, she entered a neighborhood school - - Tudor. She felt unaccepted by the other students: "Why do you talk like a teacher?" "Not like us" was the message. She went to the fifth grade for accelerated Math and English at this time. She went back into the 1A program and was in PAC (part of the gifted program) two days a month. She was happy: "They're all different there." She was a bookworm, not athletic. Her P.E. teacher suggested some testing because of coordination problems. Says her mother, "I was impressed they noticed the need." "A single working mother doesn't have much time for involvement, but it was encouraged. I just had the basic parent/teacher conference type of deal. I've never picked up on any type of negatives with the relationship."

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Focus Group Research: Parents in Support Groups

On August 27 and September 19, 1991, Craciun and Associates conducted focus group research for the Winning With Stronger Education (WISE) project. Participants were from parenting support groups sponsored by social service agencies in Anchorage. They were mothers needing help in dealing with their children or needing support for themselves as parents.

PART I: SUMMARY

These parents were all low-income women with a mean age of thirty. The annual household income of all but one of the women was less than $20,000. One woman reported annual income of $50,000. Most of the women had graduated from high school and attended some college and technical training.

A. Foremost Problems
Child care and high education costs are the major concerns for these parents.

B. Problems in the Schools
Most of the participants had little that was good to say about the school system. They cited the following problems in their children's schools:

Anchorage School District
Overloaded classrooms (particularly a Special Ed class with thirty-two students).
Lack of accessibility of teachers.
Little feedback from teachers about their children.
Being treated "like a stupid parent" when visiting schools.
Not enough homework.
Schools with "more money" getting better programs.

The University of Alaska, Anchorage (Verbatim)
I can't have a student loan and any other loan I can get. They'll cut the student loan.
UAA, two years for $15,000!
Counselors need to know what's going on.
Counselors are not assigned until you're in the system; there's no help getting in.
The university system is intimidating.

B. Solutions: (Verbatim)
Anchorage School District:
Why can't someone tell me where to take my child for testing?
A specially trained person to do testing would be wonderful.
Have more pilot and optimal programs available for children of lower-income people.
Don't push them (children) ahead if they are not ready.
Have smaller classes.

University of Alaska, Anchorage
Make access to opportunities easier.
More counseling from people who know what's going on.
Cheaper child care for children of students of UAA.
Hands-on training. I learned more through work than... school.
Some reasonable-priced housing.
Have classes in how to study and how to enroll in college.

PART II: EXPERIENCES OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN WITH EDUCATION

The profiles which follow are selected for illumination; they may not reflect entire group composition.

" I couldn't afford anything. "

One parent went through tenth grade, married, earned a GED and went to the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). "I had to wait for the next classes where they'd pay for everything. I couldn't afford anything. I worked full time and went to school. Afterwards, when it was supposed to be free, a bill came for $2000."

At JTPA, "one teacher was incompetent, not certified." They "got me a job at McDonald's." Later, "I got into Costco and did some computer work. I had to quit because of illness." She took a student loan, went to travel school and "was graduated with a ninety-three" percent. She is now in travel and likes it but is really interested in nursing. "Student loans and stuff will kill you. They're killing me now." "Nursing has no two-year program, just four-year."

"At travel school I paid $5,000; they were just going on day after day teaching stuff not needed on the job. I didn't learn as much as in practical, on-the-job experiences. Unfortunately, the school is required to get into the travel field."

" I'll try a different approach. "

This mother has three children. One is at College Gate, the others are at Wendler and East. In the second grade, her Special Ed child had thirty-two in his class. "He does not read in third grade." She had a conference call with the school and her ex-husband but "didn't get what was wanted."

The experiences of the child at Wendler produced "nothing but problems. There was teacher/student conflict. The manner of discipline was outrageous. A pass was required to go to the bathroom." Once when her daughter started menstruating, the teacher said, "I've had to go home with blood on my pants," implying that the teacher's experience made it okay for the daughter.

"Then there were conferences for parents to meet with their children's teachers. Parents lined up in front of the teachers in long lines waiting to talk to them." "I went to parenting classes. I want the teachers to learn everything I've learned."

In the fifth grade at Wendler, the child was put in TEAM, but that didn't work either. This mother was so upset over her daughter's experiences that she requested testing and was refused. The child was getting more and more frustrated, "low self-esteem; for instance, she'd have special projects requiring extra supplies that I couldn't afford. It was embarrassing to her."

"I was never notified what was going on; it was the same with my son."

"I'm really upset. I'm going to be more aware from now on. I'll try a different approach. The stage of thinking it was all okay is over. I'll no longer go to the school. I won't go to group conferences. I'll ask for one-on-one."

" I have no faith in the system. "

Another parent classifies herself as "a professional student." After having dropped out of high school in Fairbanks to support a family, she moved to Anchorage. She went to UAA "to search for what I wanted, something to do with children. I'm on the edge of being certified and have applied for aid." She has two years to complete in elementary teaching. "They make it hard for you to complete the degree in a reasonable time."

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"I lost a work/study opportunity through not meeting job application deadlines. After a month of part-time people giving me poor information, I was finally told where to go to fill out applications. But it was too late. At UAA, counselors are not assigned until you are in the system; there's no help in getting in." "I have no faith in the system."

This woman has two children, one is three and a half, the other is seven. They are enrolled in preschool (Montessori-based) and College Gate. She came from Fairbanks and investigated preschools, starting with the Yellow Pages. She finally got to the child care program offered by the Lutheran Church, about ten miles from home. She says her children show great progress the first two quarters but drop off from boredom in the third quarter (This appears to be a pattern).

" The university system is intimidating. "

A married participant has a five-year old daughter who attends "a private school." "Shows what I think of the ASD." She did not go to school in Anchorage, but graduated from high school in Iowa. While she has never taken classes in Anchorage, she has tried. "The classes are always full. "When she went to UAA to talk with a counselor, she was "very discouraged. I was not impressed with this guy." She is definitely interested in attending classes in computers and maybe working on a degree, but "the university system is intimidating" to her. "A lot of people are shy and timid about the university. They need to have a class in how to study and how to enroll in college."

" I like the school... "

One mother was very satisfied. "I like the school. the principal and the teachers." She walks her daughter to school every day and "is free to come into classes anytime." She really likes that. Her only complaint about the school was that her child "never has homework." She feels that "kids should have homework in all grades."

" Problem Child "

Another participant grew up in Anchorage. Due to her family's moving "very frequently," her early years in school "were totally messed up" and she did not graduate from high school. The last school she attended was Chugiak. The "teachers were pretty good" but the school system "lost her record" so she quit. She is not married and has one son who is in Head Start and "has learning problems." At this time, she is "a welfare mama" but plans to go back into the educational system once her son is in school full-time.

She considers her boy "a problem child." She also has had "trouble with a niece and nephew who are in her custody." These children were enrolled at Mountain View. When her nephew complained of not liking the teacher and became reluctant to go to school, she decided to visit the school. She witnessed the "teacher calling him all kinds of nasty names in front of everyone." When the teacher saw her in the hall watching, the teacher came out of the class and proceeded to "yell" at her. She went to the principal who told her she could not move the child to a new classroom, instead her options were to "leave him or transfer to a new school."

" Never had to write. "

One other woman was also receiving welfare. She has three children (two live with her), aged three, six and nine. The six-year old attends Chinook and the other two are not in the ASD. She is interested in taking classes, but "needs to know how to study." When she lived in California she attended a private school where she "never had to write." She "circled answers" on class assignments and tests and developed her skills in reading, but not in writing and spelling. She believes "people on welfare should have to be in some training." She wants to get her GED some day.

Run Over By The System

Two of the participants had attended schools in the Anchorage School District. Neither had a good experience. One wasn't a good student and her parents wouldn't take up for me. The teachers and the system "killed my creativity by not giving me a chance to continue with the things I was good at." As soon as she would make a B or C, they would put her in a harder class. She felt the system had run over her as a student. After taking tenth grade "for the third time" she went to the office and they said she was not enrolled. Her records had been lost. She has not sought her GED because it "doesn't mean didley squat." "I would rather have had the diploma, to have gone to the prom and all that." She also expressed the need for child care in order to go back to school. "I gotta be able to study." She believes education is important for her "to be able to make a living, not just exist."

The other woman who attended an Anchorage high school also felt the system failed her. She was advanced in reading but "my spelling is horrible." She thinks this could and should have been detected by her teachers. Since graduating from high school she has taken classes "at the college" and believes that everything she needs for training and education is "here (in Anchorage). You just have to find it."

Waiting to Hear

Four women agreed that they would like very much to go to school. The three who have their high school diplomas expressed concern about the cost and the fears they have about going to the university. There is "no counselor" at the welfare office to assist them and they were unaware of resources (like the AWRC) in the community to assist them with what program to study and how to enroll in school. All of the women would need child care in order to go back to school. (This, and the lack of money for tuition were the two major obstacles to their returning to school.)

The one other common complaint these women had regarding educational opportunities was lack of information. Three of the four on welfare had been told they would "be contacted when there is an opportunity available. They were all waiting to hear and one was especially impatient with the system. "I don't want to be on welfare when I'm ninety-nine."

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Focus Group Research: Women in Treatment Programs

On August 22 and September 19, 1991, Craciun and Associates conducted focus group research for the Winning With Stronger Education (WISE) project. Participants were low-income women in treatment programs.

PART I: SUMMARY

The low-income women were a homogeneous group in several respects. Although "low-income" is defined as under $30,000/year, the participants all had incomes under $20,000. All were mothers. Two-thirds of them had obtained their GED's, either through pregnant student programs or with help from concerned teachers. The majority were interested in furthering their education or training but were finding it hard to cope with child-rearing while trying to make a living and "get themselves together."

A. Foremost Problem

The number one problem facing this group is child care. The high cost makes it virtually impossible for the mother of young children to augment her education or to work outside the home.

B. Hopelessness

Most of those interviewed felt they had been shortchanged somehow in their own education. They felt they should have been given more personal attention. They had not been given sufficient guidance and advice to cope with life or with the world of work and had no knowledge of the options facing them. Generally theproblem of the relevancy of education to the job market was a primary concern. The need for developing or up-grading skills through education or training is recognized. Verbatim comments, however, indicate barriers must be removed:

> I know how to get into the system, but I need help on going back to school.
> I want to support my kids, but there's no way.

When asked directly if they really had much hope for alleviating their situations, only a few of the participants responded positively.

C. Parental Involvement with Schools

Their involvement with their children's education ranged from one woman who "didn't know you were allowed to go to school and ask questions" to another who "walks her daughter to school every day." All the parents who visited the schools felt welcome and comfortable. Nevertheless, they specified the importance of not having their concerns "sloughed off," of having time taken with them and their offspring.

D. Lack of Challenge Within the Schools

There was much discussion about the lack of challenge within the school system. (Verbatim)
They aren't teaching enough. As long as you come, you get your grades. - - A SAVE student
Up here they just give you the answers; you don't have to go out and learn for yourself.
Schools are too easy.
We didn't earn what we got.
The key is getting what you really want.
Kids should have homework in all grades.

E. Solutions to Problems

Participants considered what would make it easier for them to get into the system, what services the community should provide. When asked to consider what they wanted from education or training by completing the phrase, "It would be great if Anchorage just had...," the participants suggested the following:

Free child care for mothers trying to educate themselves to raise their children decently.
One-on-one tutoring for people like me who just can't learn in a classroom.
Employers who would give you a chance. They want experience before they'll hire you.
More work/study.
Guidance for all students to help them find what they want to do.
Take into consideration that people learn in different ways.
Multicultural programs.

F. Final Comments

To finalize the session the moderator asked, "What can or should Anchorage do?" The answers follow:

Provide free child care.
Have smaller classrooms.
More one-on-one teaching.
Special attention for special people. Don't just push them through the system.
Have respect for the individual - - show care, love, recognition.
Have parenting classes in junior and senior high schools.
Have sex education classes in elementary school to supplement home training. Parents should be involved.
Teach drug and alcohol awareness. (The starting grade suggestions here went as far down as first grade!)
More advice and direction and information.
Have preschool at the schools to get kids used to it and to make it convenient for parents.
Need health care. If you work, even five dollars per hour, you lose your health care for you and your kids.

PART II: EXPERIENCES OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN WITH EDUCATION

The profiles which follow are selected for illumination; they may not reflect the entire group composition.

" Visited the school... really impressed. "

One mother said she dropped out of school at fifteen (not in Anchorage) "from boredom." She said the only interesting class was English, and she wants to be an English teacher. She received her GED, has thirty-two college credits and attended computer school, where she was "guaranteed" a ten-dollars-an-hour job. The job did not materialize as entry-level pay in the computer field is six-dollars-an-hour.

The participant has one child five years old, enrolled in the Montessori program because the parent likes their approach to teaching: "He wants to learn; it's play learning, and he enjoys it." She commented, "I definitely want to know what's going on. I visited the school a few times and was real impressed."

" I didn't know what was going on. "

Another mother remembers little of her schooling until high school in Dillingham where "I had to work to get my grades." She was pleased with a work/study program in her school. She also cited experiences in a journalism class where "we made a book on Native culture, interviewed older people. We did something that involved the school and culture." She attended Alaska Business College and Alaska Junior College, and although she keeps dropping out because of personal problems, she keeps going back.

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In this family there is one son, age twenty-two, who was educated in Anchorage. The mother was offended because "the school didn't leave him with something to do." He was not taught work-readiness skills. The mother did not know she could be involved with his schooling: "I didn't know what was going on with him."

" I like where she is right now. "

A promising student with a scholarship to UAF, became involved with drugs and alcohol, married, and had marital problems. She has never gotten a job but would very much like to work in food technology. The parent of two children (four and six), she told of the experiences in school of the older child, a hydrocephalic daughter. The child was tutored through the Bristol Bay Native Association. "It was good because they worked with me to help her." Later the child was in Special Ed, then preschool. She was mainlined into Scenic Park first grade, and the mother is pleased: "I wanted her to think she was like other kids." "I like where she is right now."

However, she is not pleased with the experiences of her younger son. He was evaluated for a special need that might put him "up higher on the list" to get into a Head Start program. "I don't like that, but they're so crowded they have to do it."

" I want to learn to be a mother again. "

This participant said little about her own schooling. "I have never been with my children. I left when they were four and five; they're eleven and twelve now." However, she has a six-year-old ("She's hyper"). She says, "I want to learn how to be a mother again."

" I don't know anything about my culture. "

A shy parent who was educated in Ketchikan dropped out of school at fourteen. She said, "I don't know anything about my culture, and I'm an Alaska Native. I know the basics - English, Math -- but I don't know anything else." She says she cannot learn in the classroom, needs one-on-one assistance. This mother is now nineteen and has three children (four years, two years, and seven months) in foster homes. She bemoaned her lack of parenting skills and knowledge of how to cope with life.

Tale of Two Welfare Mothers

Two mothers moved here from California. One has a college degree in Home Economics, the other "got pregnant and dropped out in ninth grade." Neither woman is currently married. The college graduate has two-year old twin daughters. She has enrolled them at Providence Center for Child Development. In order to "be there" for her daughters and "to work on herself," she is not currently working and is receiving welfare.

The other woman is also receiving welfare. She has three kids (two live with her in Anchorage) aged three, six and nine. The six-year old attends Chinook and the youngest is at home with her. She is "interested in taking classes, but needs to know how to study." She "can read, but can't spell" and hopes to get her GED someday.

Focus Group Research: Individuals Experiencing Disabilities

On August 27, 1991, Craciun and Associates conducted focus group research for the Winning With Stronger Education (WISE) project at the Alaska Specialized Education Training Service (ASETS) building. Participants were individuals experiencing disabilities.

PART 1: SUMMARY

The group had a mean age of twenty-nine and were all low income employees (under $30,000/year). Their formal education ended with high school except for one who took some classes at UAA. The group consisted of one female; the rest, male. They were all unmarried and childless.

These individuals have significant barriers to employment and need assistance in entering the job market. Whenever possible they are taken out of the traditional "sheltered workshop" and given the support they need to perform jobs in the real world. Supported employment (in this case ASETS) sends a trainer to the job site to identify tasks and assist the employee to understand limitations surrounding the job the person will do. The trainer accompanies the person the first day, but, as the employee feels more secure, the trainer fades from the scene.

All the participants expressed contentment in their work. It gives them a sense of worth. They are easily offended when reprimanded for something they did not do because they feel a strong sense of responsibility and like to know they are doing what they are told. They don't like several people telling them what to do.

One respondent said he felt the skills learned had "really helped; like communicating with customers." "I can do everything now." "They depend on me."

Common complaints

"Sometimes it feels like I'm doing all the work." "Sometimes I get blamed when others don't do their job."
"Sometimes two or three people give me orders, I can't do them all at once."
They will request that someone else do something. "I ask nicely." They feel responsible to the customers. They are accommodating to customers - - trained to be polite and helpful.
Extra incentives (tips) are much appreciated. One participant, for instance, will get a percentage of anything he sells "off a particular rack."
"I don't like people mad at me." This referred to employers or ASETS people. (All expressed agreement here.)
Two expressed an interest in some computer training.

PART II: EXPERIENCES WITH EDUCATION AND THE WORK PLACE

The profiles which follow were selected for illumination; they may not reflect the entire group composition.

<u>Lost in School</u>

This young lady was at Dimond High School and found it "too big." Evidently one could get lost looking for classrooms or the cafeteria. She had graduated in 1988. She works at Wendy's and finds the job "okay." "They tell me what I need to know." She gives her paycheck to her dad..."

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Satisfied and Pleased

This young man went to grade school in Portland. He graduated from Dimond High in 1988 (He bussed tables there). He feels good about his education; he liked reading, math, writing. For three or four summers he took classes at UAA (one and a half hours) where he worked half day and was paid to work. He was satisfied and pleased with his treatment and the way things were done.

Worth More?

One participant has been at TACO BELL for five years on a job found by ASETS. He likes to "do the food" (wrap the food) and can put a taco together. He wonders if he should be paid more for handling food. He likes talking to people and "helping people in the lobby." He is trained to clean floors, tables, etc., and "can do things right."

" I wanted to be a broadcaster but I gave up. "

One participant was in work/study at Service in the ninth grade. "I got lost; it looks like a prison.""There were lots of fights; I just walked away or around them." He was at work/study at East in the tenth grade and in the program at West when the program was moved there. He graduated in 1975. In work/study he earned credit towards graduation, not money. After high school he was in Tacoma four years "acquiring skills at a workshop." In 1979 he had a brief stint with the Red Cross, but they "wanted me to climb a ladder and I can't." He was an usher at Totem Theater in 1981-1982 and then came to ASETS. "I stuck on stickers for Fish and Game in a bindery." He worked in the Elmendorf Post Office for five years ("sorted, pitched, dealt with second class packages.")

Now he is getting ready to start a new job at Union Center Monogram Shop. "I want to be with customers." "I always wanted to be a broadcaster but I gave it up." He says he got no response from a teacher he asked for help. "At that time broadcasting school was in California." He would still like to be routed into broadcasting but says, "It would be fine with me to stay five years at Monogram."

" I like to help people move. "

Another participant went to school on the East Coast - Philadelphia - because there were no special schools for the disabled in Anchorage. He returned in 1979. He "did carpenter's work" and was on deliveries for Linden Transport, then at the Pioneer Home, at the Pet House, and at Sullivan Arena. "Somebody here found the jobs." For about a year he has been at the National Guard Armory on base doing janitorial work. He liked best his job on traffic control at the Sullivan Arena because he was outside. He worked every night. He wanted to work for Mayflower and called them several times but "they were not hiring. I like to help people move. I helped my relatives move." (He would still like to do this, he says.)

Selected In-Depth Personal Interviews: Alaska Natives

Main Themes in Alaska Native Interviews

The one big theme expressed by all interviewees in answer to virtually every question was the failure of the school system and the community as a whole to accept and deal with diversity. All Alaska Natives interviewed reported that all Natives coming to Anchorage from rural Alaskan villages experience culture shock, and virtually all identifiably Native students experience racial discrimination in Anchorage schools. All interviewees gave the opinion that the effects of these problems would be much less disastrous if the schools could better address the realities of the culturally and socio-economically diverse citizenry of Anchorage.

Specifically, it was emphasized that the problems that cultural minorities, low-income, and transient/newcomer populations have in getting education and training in Anchorage must be recognized. Furthermore, many interviewees observed that making the most of human diversity should actually be a plus for everyone, and neither the majority population nor the school system seems to understand or appreciate that. As far as Alaska Natives are concerned, learning to appreciate and deal with diversity is basic to education.

All Alaska Native interviewees placed the highest personal value on education and expressed the opinion that education was the key to the quality of their own and their children's futures.

With good education you can be happy and get a good job.

All Alaska Natives interviewed think that education in the basic skills of city life, including reading, writing, math, and social and job skills is essential. Yet they observe that the schools are largely failing to provide that knowledge to Native Alaskans and other minority students.

Our children are not learning what the other children are - - my daughter got passed to the second grade and she couldn't read yet. I had to demand that she get tested and help her myself.

My son graduated from high school and he can't even write a letter without my help.

The most basic reason given by most interviewees for why so few Alaska Natives succeed in Anchorage schools is that Native students are made to feel bad about themselves.

The other children called my children 'dumb Eskimo' and the teachers didn't do anything about it. There is too much of that kind of stress on our kids here in Anchorage.

Our children get discouraged because they feel unloved and worthless - - every student needs love and caring and high expectations for how they do.

Many interviewees noted that the standard curricula present Native people as socially and morally inferior.

They think we are primitive wild men just because we were defeated by superior technology.

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The "cowboys and Indians," "us and them" mentality permeates the history, literature and social studies texts, for example. What Native students read, hear and see about themselves in school and on TV is rarely flattering, often inaccurate and bears little relation to either present-day or historical realities. Furthermore, the present day concerns of Native people are largely unknown to non-Native people.

They (non-Natives) don't know anything about us ...
they don't know how Native people think.

Often teachers and other students expect little of Native students, and this is communicated to them in countless thoughtless ways.

When my son made the honor roll she said to me
'I didn't think a Native student could do so well',
and that teacher thought it would make me happy to hear her say that!

Often Native students that come from the villages do not have stylish clothes or tastes and are disregarded or criticized by their peers and teachers alike.

Those (white) parents did not want their daughters to go out with my sons.

Interviewees point out that many Native people come from the villages to stay or live in Anchorage without any awareness of or preparation for the city way of life. Their adjustment to city life is very difficult and the schools and the community do not help, and Native people feel lost and helpless here. It was suggested that a course in adjustment to city life be offered in the village, to help smooth the transition.

Interviewees often described their experience, and the experiences of their children in school, with the words "intimidation," "disconnected" and "misunderstandings." They also describe the attitude and manner of city people, including many school teachers and administrators as "abrupt," "rude," "disrespectful," "snide," "snotty," "sarcastic" and "unfriendly." They point out that to do well a student needs to feel that teachers and peers are "supportive," "respectful" and "caring."

Lack of multicultural training and experience of teachers and administrators was often noted. Interviewees often observed that basic human compassion is lacking for those students who are slow because they are new to Anchorage or from different cultural backgrounds or are less wealthy.

Alaska Natives often made the point that there is a relationship between social pathologies, such as alcoholism, suicide, unemployment and helplessness, and the bad educational and school experiences that Alaska Native children have had while growing up. Negative self concepts are internalized by Native students who feel that their teachers and peers do not care about them or appreciate them.

Lack of Native Alaskan teachers, administrators or other important role models was often noted by interviewees. In particular, interviewees bemoaned the lack of Native tutors and teachers for subjects in which knowledge of Native cultures is essential, such as in bilingual education. Interviewees often noted that Native teachers were needed because

they know both worlds, and whites, especially those coming in from outside, do not.

The daily experience of racial discrimination (and especially institutional tolerance of racism), condescension toward Natives, and insensitivity to Native students from both teachers and other students is a pressing concern of Native interviewees. Interviewees often observed that the problem is often not ill intent or even lack of good will, but ignorance and lack of awareness or interest in other cultures.

Every teacher and student, in fact, every person in Anchorage should have multicultural training.

Alaska Natives expressed the opinion that people with different cultural backgrounds have different learning styles.

There is no one ideal school - - each has their own way of learning.

In the village we are very free and everyone just respects one another... traditionally the children just naturally do what the elders or the teacher is doing, but here there are a lot of rules to follow and no one respects anyone, only the rules.

Furthermore, interviewees frequently argued that every individual must be encouraged and allowed to make the best progress he or she can. *If a student is bashful, the teacher should help them anyway.*

Many interviewees stated that *everyone must start from the beginning* - with whatever he or she knows and does not know at the beginning of the class or training process. For example, if the student does not speak English or know how to count numbers, he or she must learn that before reading or doing math.

Many interviewees stated that *the worst of all is being passed on to new grades when the student has not yet learned what they were supposed to have learned in the old grade.*

Many interviewees emphasized the need for strong "standards" and "discipline." Many noted that the combination of showing the child that you care and being strict about discipline is crucial.

Alaska Native interviewees often made the point that there are certain basic skills that everyone must know to get a job and to be happy today - - like reading, writing and arithmetic. They often argued or implied that if people cannot get these skills then they become or remain dependent on the rest of society ("on welfare for life") and nobody benefits.

The need for special tutoring and other help was often mentioned. Yet just as often the interviewees emphasized that they did not want anything but equal consideration and equal treatment for their needs compared to what any other students were getting. Slow-tracking of Natives as a whole, or any other suggestion of low expectations of Native students by teachers and administrators, was fiercely resented.

Interviewees thought that every child should be tested for placement in special enrichment and high achievement programs. In their opinion, this would stop the potential of culturally-biased teachers unfairly eliminating Native children from participating in these programs.

They don't think our children can be as gifted as whites.

Whites are the superstars of the school, and they don't even think that Native kids know anything.

Actually our children have more depth - we speak more languages and have better cross-cultural skills and understanding - but that doesn't show up in the classroom or the tests.

Almost all interviewees emphasized the importance of having help (tutoring) available for students who are slow, as well as for students who are just beginning to fail. It was suggested that if the problem can be discovered and corrected before it becomes chronic, it can be overcome. *Currently, if you fall behind, you stay behind.*

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A high percentage of interviewees note that the lack of safe transportation prevents students from taking advantage of after-school tutoring because they miss the regular bus and there is no other transport available to the child who stays after school. *Why can't there be even just one van for the students who need to stay after school to be tutored? The athletes and other special programs get to have transport, but not the students trying to learn the basics!* Also, in many of these neighborhoods there are no sidewalks, or "people bother the children if they are walking alone" and "in the winter it is too dark."

Often those interviewed described how some children got good results from help given by special tutors in special programs such as SAVE.

We taught our other children to read (not the school), but our daughter was dyslexic and the SAVE tutor taught her to read. She couldn't have learned otherwise.

Appreciation was often expressed for the Indian Education and Johnson O'Malley programs. Yet, interviewees often expressed frustration about getting their children into these programs. Most of those whose children had attended bilingual, Indian Ed, and/or JOM programs thought that they were very good, but noted that they were understaffed and underfunded. Some interviewees raised the question of why these programs and ones like them are offered as something apart from the regular curriculum, since all students can benefit from accurate knowledge of other languages and cultures.

If white children knew more about Native culture,
they wouldn't be so negative about it.

Many Native parents wished that their children could study Native languages in bilingual courses, such as those taught in many villages today, rather than just having bilingual classes for foreign language speakers to learn English. It was often noted that German and French are "irrelevant to us." Many parents stated that they themselves did not know their own Native language because they or their parents were punished for speaking it when they were in school. But their own children want to learn it and have no opportunity to do so in Anchorage, even though there are elders living here who could teach it to them.

Social, moral and spiritual training are educational "basics" as far as Native interviewees were concerned. While much of this is learned at home, they often stated that schools must at least guide students and affirm or reinforce in them attitudes of universal human "respect and dignity," "equality and justice," "freedom" and "creativity," regardless of cultural or socio-economic differences.

Almost all interviewees stressed the need for basic adult education for people coming from the villages in terms of "life training" - including finance and budgeting, social and job skills. These include how to apply for a job, drive and buy a car, and more basic problems like speaking English, reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Almost all interviewees thought that career decisions should be stressed in Anchorage schools, and information provided about the specific jobs available in the future and the qualifications necessary to get them.

Many interviewees thought that many more computers are needed for students, and that many more students should be learning computer skills. *There are so many jobs in word processing!*

Many adults stated that basic adult education courses are too expensive for them to take, but if they could only take a course or two (in computers, for example) they could get a job. Many also noted that they need better information and access to adult education classes. *There is too much paperwork involved - especially if someone can't read or write in the first place!*

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Many parents of school children stated that they wanted to and would participate in their child's teacher conferences and other school activities but they lacked child care for their other children and consequently could not attend.

Almost all interviewees stated a strong need for education on drug and alcohol abuse, sex and sexual disease transmission, and cross-cultural and racism awareness.
Most interviewees stated that there are too many students per teacher - both class and school sizes should be smaller. Many stated that good teachers should be rewarded and poor teachers (and administrators and superintendents) must be fired, and, in general, teachers need more pay and training.

Also many noted that some of the old skills are not sufficient anymore. *Our children need to be video-literate. Now a lot of information comes over TV and movie screens, not in books. A person can read books and have no idea what is really going on!*

Some interviewees suggested that an ideal school would concentrate on studying the "differences between Western and Native cultures." One parent noted reports that "America is behind other countries now in science, health, and education in general. We should be doing things differently. We must look at how it's done in other countries where there are Native people." Often the opinion was stated that a Native curriculum should be offered, at least as choices, "because what has been and is already being tried has not worked."

Many interviewees stated that schools should be "open to different cultures" and "take pride in getting the job done for everyone equally."

Almost all of the persons interviewed were members of low-income households. Most interviews were conducted at the interviewee's home on a volunteer basis. Most of these homes were in the north and south Mountain View areas, though residents of Fairview, Spenard and Downtown were also interviewed. Interviewees who are permanent residents of Anchorage were also recruited from networking with the Alaska Native student center at UAA. The large majority were low-income. A very few interviews were done in public places including Alaska Native Hospital, Mountain View Community Center and Alaska Native Student Center at UAA. A wide variety of Alaska Native Eskimo and Indian cultural identities were represented among persons interviewed.

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Selected In-Depth Personal Interviews: Asian Americans

Main Themes in Asian American Interviews

Fluency in English is the number one education priority of these Asian Americans (Koreans, Filipinos and Pacific Islanders). All believed that any future success in the job market or in advancing their education depended upon their ability to learn the English language, or increase their fluency. They believed that the primary barrier to their success was the lack of English skills. (It is important to note that Asian American / Pacific Islanders, only 5.7% of the Anchorage School District's enrollment accounted for over half of the students in their 1990-91 Bilingual Program.)

Some respondents have college degrees from their own countries, but must take jobs requiring much less education (an economist was working in a laundry). Most people interviewed must take two jobs just to make ends meet, leaving them little, if any, time to increase their English skills. Others are considered too old by their culture to take classes.

I want to learn English, but I work two jobs.

No time to learn English; I'm working two jobs. Maybe next year.

Some Asian Americans are using the Anchorage Literacy Project to obtain English communication skills and are passing word of this project throughout the Asian community. Learning English would enable them to further their education and obtain a GED. To these people, education leads to better jobs.

If you want a better job, you have to have a degree;
and a degree offers more money.

I don't want to be a laborer all my life.
I would like to get some kind of higher education.

A GED is a piece of paper; I want to learn.

I want to get my GED, but I have a job and can't afford the babysitter.

"English as a Second Language" (ESL) classes are viewed as critical and Asian residents wanted more for students in the public schools and for adults in the community. While they are in agreement about the importance of learning English, they were not in agreement as to where and by whom it should be taught. Some were satisfied with existing ESL programs, but the majority were dissatisfied.

The expense and inconvenience of child care and transportation were major obstacles to attending ESL classes. They hoped there could be more ESL classes taught in their own neighborhoods.

The one concern shared by most families was the ESL programs in the schools, designed to help children with very little command of the English language. Although they were in favor of keeping the programs in school, they were not satisfied with the way they were being managed. The segregation issue was one reason. Because bilingual classes are taught in simple English, classes were considered by nonbilingual students as being "easy." Thus, students in ESL programs are also thought of as "dumb."

Also, there are some students in the ESL program who speak English very well but chose to stay in the class because of the opportunity to get "good grades." Therefore students with varying command of the English language are put in the same class. Grouping these students of varying levels of skill and desire often leads to derogatory labeling of them by peers, and, in some cases, teachers. Labels such as "dumb" and "slow" greatly effect a student's self-esteem and low self-esteem often results in behavioral problems in the classroom.

We are not stupid, we just can't understand English.

Classes here are easier [than in Korea] but
I was failing because I could not speak good English.

Kids should be in the same class, and just work with them a little more,
not label them dumb.

So many kids give up in school, only because they can not speak English.

We need more bilingual classes and tutors.

ESL programs should be kept in the schools.

Many of these participants were involved in a bilingual class and the SAVE program and there was disagreement as to the usefulness and success of these programs. Some expressed dissatisfaction with the school system because it separates the English-speaking from the non-English-speaking, thereby automatically organizing racial cliques.

While Asian Americans want to learn English, they do not wish to leave their culture behind. They also stress the need to teach multicultural history and to organize more clubs based on cultural identity.

People need to know how to appreciate each other.

Culture clubs should get together and mix.

Where people came from -- multicultural history --
should be part of the curriculum.

Other barriers to education for this group were transportation and the lack of affordable child care. While buses are a necessity for these families because they cannot afford private transportation, the bus system is a nuisance. While these students are in need of special help and tutoring after school, they cannot stay because they will have no way to get home.

Also, due to zoning laws, parents are not always able to send their children to the nearest school. Their children must catch school buses, sometimes several blocks away, because of the apartment structure. Children often have to walk four or five blocks to catch the bus and this deters them from going to school.

Many of the students surveyed had received their high school diploma but were dissatisfied with the education they received in Anchorage. They stressed the need for more vocational and practical education.

They teach enough academics, but not practical classes. They didn't prepare us enough about life. Social skills were missing, like dealing with people above or below you at work.

I want to apply education toward work. That's what it's all about.

ASD should offer a system for specializing in either higher learning or vocational training.

School didn't prepare me for anything.

My teachers gave me a "C" and I didn't even go to class.

I didn't learn anything in school that helps in getting a job. Why is swimming required to graduate?

Some of these people were also dissatisfied with their treatment from teachers. They felt many teachers were insensitive to minorities. Those who meet discrimination at school respond by becoming less involved with the school and their children's education. One woman recalled an open house:

The teacher must be busy...she was acting as if she doesn't have time for me, so I just backed off.

These Asian Americans -- many whom were graduates of the ASD -- were dissatisfied with their education as well as their teachers. Their teachers and counselors failed them in two ways: (1) the lack of understanding of their culture and (2) teacher's skills did not measure up to teachers from their homeland. Families felt that teachers should be bilingual so they can understand the different cultural aspects that come to play in group dynamics. If it is not possible to have a bilingual teacher, a teacher who is schooled in language and multicultural history would be a good substitute.

Teachers are in Alaska for the money.

Should have counselor for each minority.

Today's teachers need to go back to school and polish up their skills.

Too many gym teachers who substitute teach.

Teachers don't listen to Orientals like they do whites.

Asian American families have different expectations of school and education. They base their expectations on the education systems of their homeland; they are unfamiliar with *American ways*. Again, lack of English communication skills and lack of savvy about the American school system were major obstacles to parental involvement.

American and Oriental education different. In Korea, teachers were like parents. Here, teaching is just another job.

Here, teachers are looked at low.

My parents could offer no support during my schooling. My father worked two jobs and my mother was shy and unaccustomed to American ways.

I have a daughter in second grade. I have to work and can't be involved. I wonder if she's getting the help she needs.

Parents should get involved, but they are working and can't speak English.

These residents also expressed a desire to see more involvement from Anchorage businesses in the education system.

Businesses should have a program, learn now, pay later.

There should be more on-the-job training.

Anchorage businesses should offer more student discounts.

Other problems were mentioned by some of the more recent graduates of the Anchorage School District. They were particularly dissatisfied with the following because they had seen so much money going into sports programs:

- Overcrowding of classrooms
- Bad heating system
- Poor quality of the cafeteria food
- Lack of foreign language classes
- Inability to walk around the school because security locks all of the doors
- Lack of family counseling and psychologists

Most of the Asian Americans interviewed were female and most were in their twenties and just graduated from the Anchorage School District. Others ranged in age from eighteen to forty-seven years and a little over half had children. All had an annual household income of less than $30,000.

Selected In-Depth Personal Interviews: Hispanics

Main Themes in Hispanic Interviews

The Hispanic residents interviewed were unanimous in wanting the school district to more vigorously emphasize multicultural education and bilingual classes. Most wanted foreign language education to begin by grades one to three and hoped that more languages could be offered to students. All agreed that the schools should expand job readiness programs to all minority groups.

The schools should teach children how to find jobs.

Some Hispanic interviewees questioned the distribution of Anchorage School District funds among certain schools. A mother of two children, who were doing well in school, had the following comment:

How do the schools determine what schools get the resources?

I'm concerned about the differences between schools in our neighborhood (Mountain View) and others.
Ours seem to be run down compared to schools in South Anchorage.

It just isn't right.

There is no library in the local neighborhood.

The most frequently mentioned barrier to educational attainment and to satisfaction was language. These Hispanic residents reported frustration in school with trying to learn English. When they take classes they report that teachers do not make sure they have learned it before moving on. They also are held back from advancement in the work place because they cannot speak fluent English.

One woman, an elementary teacher from Mexico, has not been able to get a teaching job because she does not speak English.

Not being able to speak English has hampered me from being integrated.

These residents felt that the education and training opportunities available to them were too expensive and time consuming for those working long days. Participants added that the cost of English classes at the university was too expensive. Several suggested that the availability of English classes through work or through the union would be beneficial.

People are working and there is not enough time for anything else.

Classes in English are too expensive.

One young man saw education as the means to finding a job that he *liked doing*, but his lack of English skills were keeping him from furthering his education. ESL classes did not fit into his busy work schedule.

English courses are really killing me.

One other notable pattern emerged from the personal interviews. A positive relationship existed between parental attitude toward the school system and the success their children were experiencing in school. This relationship was further reflected in the parent's level of participation in the school and in the community.

In the case where his children were doing well in school and were excited about it, the father reported satisfaction with the system. He saved money for his children's education and attended courses to better his own. He has voted for more money for the schools, and his one concern was the teacher/student ratio.

Put more money into education;
More monetary support for school programs.

I would like to see the old community college system.

In contrast, one participant, a mother of three school-age children, was critical of the school system. She spoke little English but understood it sufficiently, and did not graduate from high school. Her first two children had bad experiences with discrimination in the classroom, and now the youngest doesn't want to go to junior high school because of what happened to her older siblings. The children are bilingual. The mother reported a bad experience with the principal because she felt he wasn't responsive enough to her son's problems and felt that:

The school has not treated me or my children like we are Americans.
There are stereotypes in the classroom of Hispanics being bandits and drug dealers.

Although this pattern is not substantiated by a large number of case studies in this report, it does reflect a pattern identified in other longitudinal studies.[32] That pattern indicates that education becomes a self-perpetuating cycle: the more education the parents have attained, the more they value education. This value is then passed on to the children who, in turn, repeat the same cycle.

Conversely, the opposing pattern also repeats itself: in families where the educational attainment is low, education is not valued and its importance is not part of the family value system. Educational attainment is significantly lower in these families and the attendant problems resulting from lack of education persist.

All of the persons interviewed were members of low income households, all had graduated from high school and seven had college degrees. Half of those interviewed were men having an average age of twenty-five. The average age of the women surveyed was twenty-seven. The majority of those interviewed were single and did not have children. Unlike reports from other minority groups, little or no data was obtained on class size, testing, basic skills, transportation or technology.

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Door-to-Door Interviews: Fairview Neighborhood

Fairview residents recognize the need for and importance of education. It is the means to obtaining a job and getting off of welfare.

There is no equal opportunity for those who do not have an education.

Many people yearn for the way education was in the past. While this was especially true for the older respondents surveyed, it was an important concern for most Fairview residents. They want basic training for their children and themselves. In addition to vocational and technical training, people desire training in areas traditionally left to the home, such as "how to dress" and "how to conduct oneself in public." Parents expect schools to teach their children skills applicable to real-life situations, such as how to write a resume or get a job.

School should show students how the real world is.

Schools don't teach the basic things to be prepared for life.

Many residents desired more discipline in school. A young Alaska Native interviewee preferred the education he received at a private school because it was strict.

Teachers in Alaska are too soft.

Some people referred to today's children lacking a code of conduct and the need for teaching "strong moral fiber." Teachers should teach more "American heritage and pride."

I learned the work ethic long before high school.

Older respondents were particularly negative about the education their grandchildren were receiving.

I only went to the eighth grade and I got a better education than kids today.

There was great emphasis on learning skills which would lead directly into a job opportunity. These adults want more vocational and technical training for themselves and for their children. A recent high school graduate, currently unemployed, mentioned his frustration at the limited vocational and technical training available in Anchorage.

Should have system where when kids who aren't at a certain level academically, go into vocational training.

Subjects studied in colleges in Alaska do not prepare them for the job market.

Schools don't offer support in job hunting after graduation.

The biggest problem is getting job experience, even when you have the education, said a forty year-old woman. One woman was very happy with the applied science degree she was working on because the course content included a practicum which enabled her to obtain practical experience in her field as well as an education.

This group thought the teaching of computer skills was the answer to their lack of job opportunities.

A few respondents noted the breakdown of the traditional family as part of the problem. *It's up to parents to make things better for students.* An older woman said, *I had things kids are missing today*, because of a lack of parental involvement.

Being a good student has to start with the family.

A few residents mentioned before and after school programs as a solution to providing support for those families where the primary caregiver is working.

Many of these residents rely heavily on their children's teachers to get them involved, expecting teachers to inform parents about what's going on at school. These parents will not actively seek out this information.

Teachers should help in directing the involvement of parents.

Ironically, while these parents recognize the importance of parental involvement, they have neither the time nor the resources to become involved themselves. They cannot model the behavior they hope their children will learn. Consequently, more emphasis is placed on teachers to teach things that traditionally were taught at home; these parents don't define themselves as educators or leaders. While televisions are often on in these households, very few books were observed during the interviews. Most of these residents mentioned that they rely on social services, and school is viewed as just another social service.

Many residents expressed the need for a closer relationship between parents and teachers and the importance of parental involvement. Better school-home communication was often desired.

I didn't even know my son was suspended from school.

For the most part, residents expressed satisfaction with the education their children were receiving. Unfortunately, they usually based this satisfaction on the fact that if they hadn't heard from the teacher, their child wasn't doing anything wrong, and so the education was fine. When asked in what ways she was involved in her children's education, one respondent said:

I would only deal with the teachers when the kids had problems.

There were a few positive comments on the current involvement of business in education and the hope that it will continue to be increasingly involved. Some mentioned the need for businesses to become more involved in on-the-job training programs and in providing computer equipment to schools.

The role of corporate involvement is really good.

Many of the parents surveyed were very pleased with Fairview Elementary School. Some noted the involvement of the principal and the smaller class sizes, while others noted younger teachers and computer rooms. One person made positive reference to the adult education programs held there.

Most parents stated that they felt welcome at their children's schools. One high school boy added to his parent's comments,

If there's a problem, my teachers help me out, school-related or not.

Class size and overcrowding was by far the most common problem mentioned and this problem spanned all grades, from elementary school to the university. Some referred to the need for more personalized instruction; a few people mentioned the SAVE program as offering more personalized attention and the opportunity for students to work at their own pace.

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According to these residents, large classroom sizes have a detrimental effect on those who need special attention and those who need more attention from teachers because their parents are unable to provide that attention.

Some residents mentioned the tenure system as a problem. A seventy year-old couple said:

People should be kept on only according to performance.

Only one person mentioned that foreign languages should be taught at an early age and another hoped for bilingual teachers.

While one person favored the idea of year-round school, another was strongly opposed to this idea. Only one resident mentioned the proposed coupon (voucher) system, favoring the idea.

Although English was the second language for several of those surveyed, only one Alaska Native requested the need for more bilingual teachers. However, others mentioned the communication difficulties experienced in more subtle ways.

Teachers should focus on getting the idea across.

Many lower-income residents are in social programs which deter them from seeking education. One thirty-nine year-old single parent expressed her frustration at receiving a student loan only to find that it would be viewed as income and in turn, she would be taken off AFDC. She had an Associate Degree in business because, in her day, women were forced into home economics, bookkeeping and typing, but that's not what she wanted to do.

Most of these residents aspired to some training or education, but also recognized their limited means in which to obtain them. Child care, tuition and training costs were the most common barriers to continued education. Others mentioned a lack of basic transportation.

The only way I could go back to school was if someone could watch the kids.

Those who succeed in obtaining the education and the job that they desire are hard on those who don't. For those who have struggled and made it through the system, the belief exists that you can make it if you try hard enough.

People have to motivate themselves, and have self-esteem before they can do anything, said a young Asian woman. *You have to do it yourself*, said an older black woman, obtaining her B.A. degree at age forty-three.

People have no excuse for not getting a good education.

Those interviewed in the Fairview neighborhood ranged in age from eighteen to seventy-one years, with most people falling into their thirties. The large majority had an annual household income of less than $20,000 and most had children in the Anchorage School District. African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanics, Alaska Natives and whites were interviewed and the interviews were evenly split between men and women.

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Door-to-Door Interviews: Spenard Neighborhood

The general concensus among those interviewed in the Spenard neighborhood was that they were pleased with the education available to Anchorage residents. Many have lived in the Lower 48 and Anchorage schools usually won hands-down in comparison to schools Outside.

Willow Crest and Chugach Optional received good grades from the parents whose children attended these schools. Parents expressed feeling welcome at their children's schools and believed that teachers maintained good contact with them.

I think this is one of the best school districts I've been involved in.

I'm super satisfied with the ASD.

In addition to satisfaction with the school system, many of these residents were in favor of paying more taxes earmarked for schools and raising teacher salaries. They felt that teachers were underpaid and overworked and classrooms were too crowded for teachers to teach effectively. They hoped that more tax money could go toward obtaining more teachers and/or building more schools, thereby giving children the individual attention they need. They also desired more tutors.

We need to take dollars from other sources; it's our future.

Administration gets the raises, but the teachers should.

Most anything that could be on the ballot to improve education-
like pay raises for teachers - I'd vote for.

A few Spenard residents expressed dissatisfaction with the Anchorage School District, but their dissatisfaction was loud and angry. They were unhappy with the politics involved in public education, the tenure system and the lack of individual attention in today's schools.

Right now the system is not working. We need to revamp it.
The government needs to spend more money.

I have three children who graduated from the Anchorage School District;
They know nothing of history, English, or health care.

Teachers are under worked and overpaid. Make the teachers take a proficiency test.
Teachers should lose tenure if they fail the test.

Get politicians out of education, they're screwing it up for the kids.

Get rid of all teachers and the school board and
start all over with young teachers out of college.

Schools need to recognize children's unique personalities and backgrounds.

We need people who care to be teaching. I'm really worried.

My daughter needed more personal attention.
She didn't fit the standard and there was no place for her.

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A great majority of these Spenard residents expressed the need for more after-school activities for their children. It was not clear whether these after-school activities were desirable because they would be good for the children or because they would assist these working parents.

Meet the needs of parents -- have after-school programs like campfire.
I want full-day kindergarten and after-school activities like the Girls & Boys Club.

Regardless, these parents wanted their children to be more involved with extra-curricular and sports activities. One parent was frustrated with the cost involved in having a child participate in a school sports team. She could not allow her son to join the soccer team because she could not afford the cost.

There should be more sports activities that all children can participate in, regardless of income.

Many parents would like to see the school curriculum return to teaching the basics. Their priorities were teaching children the three R's, work-readiness skills and day-to-day living skills. Several also mentioned the need for more discipline in the classrooms. Also, Spenard residents share the desire for more computer training because they believe it will lead to a good office job.

Discipline has gone to hell. Students should be flunked if necessary.

Kids should be doing their three R's first.

There is no preparation for college.

They need to teach more useful skills -- how many kids go to college?
Need to teach more for the middle class.

Some classes that should be taught - how to manage your money and pay your bills, and work experience in areas like plumbing, automechanics and electrical fields.

Get off the text books and give more hands-on experience.

In the Alaska Native interviews, they emphasized the teaching of multicultural history. Interesting to note, this population's responses were always brief until the subject of multicultural teaching surfaced. They stressed the need for more expression of their cultural background and they would like the school system to teach cultural diversity regularly.

We could be native in Kotzebue, but not in Anchorage.
Natives should get together. Celebrate their customs and heritage.
Here there is no support to do so.

About half of those interviewed in Spenard aspired to more education and/or training. Others could not imagine having the time or the money to do so and were resigned to just keeping the job that they had. The lack of affordable child care and transportation had already proven to be obstacles to any career advancement for them.

Those interviewed in the Spenard neighborhood ranged in age from eighteen to sixty-five years and the average age was thirty-seven. Most of those surveyed had an annual household income of around $30,000 and the large majority had children in the Anchorage School District. Most of the respondents in Spenard were either white or Alaska Native and the interviews were evenly split between men and women.

Door-to-Door Interviews: Mountain View Neighborhood

The majority of the Mountain View residents interviewed were dissatisfied with the education and training available to them and their children. Overcrowding in Anchorage schools was the constant complaint made by Mountain View residents, from elderly whites, to Hispanics, Natives, Filipinos, and young African Americans. Most felt the overcrowding caused the failure of the schools, but a few felt that teachers didn't care and were just there to collect their paychecks. While most people believed that smaller classes were most important in younger grades, there was disagreement as to the ideal classroom size, which ranged from ten students to thirty.

Teachers should care a little bit more about what they are teaching.
Teachers need to love what they are doing, make class interesting and challenging.
Most are there to collect paychecks.

Another theme for those interviewed was parental involvement. The importance of parental involvement was expressed by people of all ages, from young people in school to those recently graduated, and from parents of all ages. Parents expressed little comfort in going to their children's schools. They often felt unwelcomed. Many parents admitted having little involvement in their children's education.

I have doubts that enough parents get involved.

Many people mentioned the need for more one-on-one attention for slower students in all grades. Respondents felt that the average and very bright students were succeeding in the Anchorage School District, but the school was failing to respond to the needs of the slow ones who were dropping out or being passed through. They suggested smaller class sizes and more teachers' aides as possible solutions. A few parents wished that their children were held back and two mentioned that the principal refused their request to hold back their children.

Don't pass students just to get the problem students out.

Other interviewees suggested administrative cutbacks to fund smaller classes. While most parents felt sympathetic toward overworked teachers, administrators were seen as "too many chiefs with fat checks and no production."

I'd like to see teachers get more help, more teacher aids and parents in the classrooms.

Don't cut the school budget. Cut administrative costs.

Give teachers the class load they can handle - twenty maximum.

There are too many administrators and not enough teachers.

Teachers have been short-changed. They never recovered from salary cuts five years ago. They are not respected, and are overworked. People without education earn more.

Generally, respondents who were not born in the U.S. or who have had experience with schools in the Lower 48, are more satisfied with the education, training and opportunity provided in Anchorage. However, respondents from other countries as well as Alaska Natives stressed the importance of teaching multicultural history, and recognizing and accepting cultural diversity. They also wanted to see more bilingual teachers and counselors.

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U.S.A. has many more chances than Mexico.

Many parents complained about the lack of emphasis on job-related skills and practical life skills. Alaska Natives were most frustrated with the curriculum and stressed the need for immediate change. Many felt schools were not preparing the student for life because students are required, in both high school and college, to take courses which are academic in nature and have no practical value in life skills or in the job market.

We need job / life skills programs back in the classroom...
cooking, carpentry, auto mechanics.

We need more funding for programs like home economics, computer programs, auto mechanics and sports programs.

Many recent high school graduates and some college students were surprised to learn that their diplomas and degrees did not necessarily translate into a job. High school graduates wished there had been more job-related skills classes available to them, like mechanics and electricity. College students wished more practicums and on-the-job training were available to provide them with some work experience before entering the job market.

We need more on-the-job training.
University forces you to take classes that you never use.
People come out of college without having what they need to get a job.

While some of the young drop-outs interviewed were also dissatisfied with the overly-academic curriculum, they also complained about school on a far more personal level. They felt their teachers did not have the time nor the energy to give them the care and attention they needed and expected. They also wished their teachers had been harder on them and had expected more from them. They wished they had been disciplined and not allowed to get away with anything. They also felt that their teachers were not there for them, like they were for the rich kids. Unfortunately, these drop-outs had special needs -- far beyond academics -- which were not met in overcrowded classrooms or in homes where the primary caregivers were busy working (sometimes two jobs).

Teachers need to care.

Teachers need to be more understanding of our individual needs.

There was no discipline, you can get by with a lot, teachers just pass you.

A few pregnant teenagers were surveyed. Their major concern was the lack of support for them to complete high school. A forty year-old woman remembers not being allowed to finish school, while a much younger mother complained that there was no support -- mostly in the way of transportation and child care -- for her to finish. Others wished that someone -- school -- had explained to them the consequences of sex. A nineteen year-old mother and high school drop-out said:

They should teach about condoms, AIDS and love.

Another teenage mother said:

Kids are going to have sex from age fifteen on.
The schools should tell kids the consequences of sex.

There should be child care for teenagers who have kids,
and more birth control information.

A twenty-one year-old high school drop-out, mother of two, said:

School should teach more classes about what life is really like, cooking, sewing and cleaning.

A few parents mentioned the problem of drugs in the school, but there was disagreement as to the solution to the drug problem. While one parent felt there should be stiffer penalties for drugs in the schools, another thought that parents should be notified before police were summoned. Some parents thought that schools should work with parents regarding drug usage, problems and solutions. Two parents believed that guns and crime were serious concerns in the school and were not being addressed.

Some parents mentioned the busing and transportation difficulties. They were unhappy about their small children having to walk to school in the dark (in the winter) and the lack of transportation for children who need to stay after school for tutoring. Busing also proved to be an impediment for adults pursuing education, training or jobs, as it is not reliable, convenient or affordable. Others hoped that school lunches could be more nutritious, rather than tasteless fast food.

We need free lunches for low-income students, at high school level and we need buses for students who stay after school for help.

Many Mountain View residents would like to better themselves, by continuing with the education and training needed. However, limited time and financial resources make it impossible. Those relying on public assistance are unable to obtain student loans without jeopardizing that assistance. Others are stymied by the lack of affordable child care and transportation. One single mother would like more education, but must now work to support her children so they can go to college out-of-state.

The costs to attend schools after high school are staggering. We need more grants and assistance.

I can't afford what it takes to get ahead.

The Mountain View residents interviewed ranged in age from eighteen to seventy-two, with an average age of thirty-five. About half of those surveyed had children and several were young parents, aged eighteen to twenty-five. Most had an income of less than $30,000. About one-third of those interviewed were white and the other ethnic groups were about equally represented.

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Door-to-Door Interviews: Downtown Neighborhood

The low-income residents of downtown Anchorage would not dismantle the school system, but they see the current school district falling short of their expectations.

Downtown residents, especially those in their sixties and seventies, want the public schools to offer a practical education by getting back to the basics.

They teach what they want to know, not what they need to know.

They need to get to the real basics.

They should teach common day-to-day survival.

Most residents also believe that more structure and discipline is needed in the public schools which, they recall, was the case when they were in school.

I think they started changing education -- experimenting --
it got the pupils all balled up.

I went to private school and if you acted out, they threw you out.
They can't do that in public school.

More homework -- they have too much free time.

There is a minority opinion, however, that wants just the type of experimentation that the majority condemns.

Less structured experience is needed -- more based on the academy
where the children and the teacher interact.

There is also no agreement on the amount of money spent on education. Many wanted a cheaper school system and thought dollars were wasted.

Start putting the money they're asking for and give it to the children.
Where's it going? To administration?

But not all agreed, with some thinking the schools have been shortchanged.

I think the state and our assembly should help --
not enough funding and the schools are overcrowded.

Overcrowding in schools and large class sizes were recurrent themes, and most saw the current situation as unsatisfactory.

Class size should not exceed twenty-four students per class.

To this, a junior high school student added:

I want to learn more languages -- the classes are overcrowded.

Parental involvement, having their views listened to and respected, was an important issue for these residents.

I was not asked for any decisions -- they make choices behind my back.
The parents are suppose to help make decisions.

Regarding their own continuing education, several adults felt the Muncipality's transportation system was inadequate.

Transportation is unreliable.

More buses for those of us without a car.

The adults interviewed in the Downtown area ranged in age from twenty-one to eighty-six years, with about half being fifty or older. Three teenagers were also interviewed. The vast majority had annual household incomes of less than $20,000 and almost all have now or once had children attending public schools in Anchorage. The majority of interviewees were women.

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On-Site Interviews at Businesses: Low-Income Elderly Residents

The elderly people interviewed reported that, while their own formal education was completed, they did have strong opinions about today's education system in Anchorage. Their biggest concern was a need to *return to the basics*, an emphasis on reading, writing and arithmetic skills as well as more discipline in the classroom.

I lost my glasses and asked a child to read something for me.
I was shocked that she couldn't.

Basics should be priority; fundamentals like math and reading.

When given too much 'free learning time,' kids don't learn discipline.

I only went to sixth grade and
can do better math than my children who have graduated from high school.

Older Alaskans are generally willing to see more funds expended to hire more teachers, but insist on a good-faith effort by the schools to eliminate unnecessary expenses and frivolous programs. There is no agreement on what is considered unnecessary and superfluous. What some perceive as wasteful, others see as essential.

A number of older Alaskans cited a need for schools to be able to fire tenured teachers who are no longer effective. Many are also interested in seeing foreign languages taught at an earlier age.

Teachers are spending too much time on administrative paperwork
and not enough time with the kids.

Some recognized the need for smaller classes and more personalized instruction, particularly for children with special needs and minority children.

Better to have minority teachers teaching minority kids.
They'll take a greater interest in their success.

While few older Alaskans were pursuing any life-long learning, those that were appreciated the lower tuition costs, texts and materials offered at a discount for senior citizens.

On-Site Interviews at Business: Homeless Residents

Our homeless residents placed a high value on education as a means to success.

Instill the value of education in people and ambition will take its course. Education will spur success.

While many of the homeless surveyed spoke about the importance of education, their primary concern, understandably, was finding employment. Ill health seems to be a major factor preventing many homeless from obtaining employment. One interviewee said, "Employers don't want to take risks hiring people who may inflate the company's insurance premiums."

Most of the homeless are interested in working, but they don't know how to escape their predicaments of ill health or inexperience. Many recognize their need for more job skills, but don't know where to get them.

Often, they have high expectations for future employment and/or education, but little resources to assist them in attaining their goals. Specifically, they lack the funds needed for education or to start a business.

In their opinion, school curriculum should emphasize learning the three R's and problem-solving skills.

We need to teach kids how to think.

Schools are often referred to as being too overcrowded. One person referred to his granddaughter at UAA who can not get into the classes that she's required to take. Tenure was also a point of contention. One participant believed the solutions should be taken care of internally.

Leave it to the principal to weed out the bad teachers.

For the homeless, transportation was a major impediment to advancing in formal education and/or finding and keeping a job.

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On-Site Interviews at Businesses: Laborers

A belief in the values expressed in the "American Dream" is what matters to these Anchorage residents. Across the board, people commented upon the need for quality education toward future success. These parents stressed the importance of instilling a strong work ethic, suggesting a longer school day and more discipline in the classroom as part of the solution.

Many reported getting back to traditional standards which included a more punitive school system.

Teachers should have the right to punish physically. .

Let's get back to basics, back to what worked.

Some of these parents would like to see more private schools available. One person believed that this type of competition would be good for the public school system and its teachers. Private schools were considered to offer a basic curriculum, a more disciplined education and a dose of morality.

This working class knows education is the means to a good job and a happy and secure life. While they are currently engaged in physical labor jobs, they will look to education to help them find "office" work for their later years. Most recognize this need to diversify their job skills but are too busy and too tired to pursue advanced degrees. However, many report that the union hall offers job skills classes to its members and they try to attend them to improve their employability.

I have no fancy plans, just training to help prepare for the future job market.

Skill level varies among this group, with the greatest challenge reported by those who are trying to take literacy classes. They are currently relying on any and all training available through the union hall but report that they need more. Many of these primary wage earners would like to take additional classes to learn the basic three R's but can not take the time to do so. Others are not sure about where to get started to improve their English fluency skills. They report that the union halls, in their trainings, often assume they have a better grasp of the language than they do.

On-Site Interviews at Businesses: Common Themes Among Cultures

Common Themes for Native Alaskans

In contrast to the findings in other ACCESS studies, nearly all of the Alaska Natives interviewed expressed satisfaction with the education their children were receiving. (This contrast may be due to the fact that the interviewer was white, and responses elicited may have been "polite," "expected" answers.)

Alaska Natives wanted more job-related skills taught, especially those relating to high technology like computers. A few mentioned that more emphasis on English as a second language was needed. For many, transportation was a major obstacle to pursuing any education.

Common Themes for African Americans

African Americans mentioned discrimination more than any other ethnic group. They also emphasized a need for school curriculum to incorporate more black history and more black historical figures as role models.

Common Themes for Hispanics

Basic education was stressed among Hispanics. Some thought that lengthening the school day was a solution. For Hispanics, basic education included foreign languages, which they felt should be introduced early in school. Suspicion was voiced about the usefulness and/or appropriateness of certain programs -- other than the basic ones -- such as sex education.

One Hispanic was quite disturbed at the fact that his American-born, English-speaking children were placed in a bilingual program because their last name was Spanish. He believed the school was using him to gather support -- in the way of enrollment -- for the bilingual program. "My children were unhappy. They didn't even speak Spanish."

Interviewees age ranged from early twenties to late seventies with a median age in the late forties. Twice as many women were surveyed as men and about half had children in school. Most had an annual household income of less than $30,000 and a few had very little or no income. Alaska Natives, African Americans, Asian Americans, whites and Hispanics were surveyed.

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Anchorage Teachers' Focus Groups

Executive Summary

On April 27, 1991, Craciun & Associates conducted focus group research for the Winning With Stronger Education (WISE) Project. Participants were teachers from the Anchorage School District, randomly selected from 306 teachers who volunteered after receiving a letter of invitation to participate The primary objective of this study was to determine teacher perceptions of and attitudes towards selected educational issues. Secondary objectives were to determine what teachers consider the major deterrents to stronger education in Anchorage and to determine the best way to assure teacher involvement in the tasks forces of the project.

Dual Cultures

Showing up clearly in the focus group research is the existence of dual cultures : teachers and bureaucracy. These opposing structures struggle for empowerment as teacher-professionals meet head-on the realities of bureaucratic politics and the self-sustaining duplicities which spring from them. Pressuring both of them is "the community," which consists now of a large number of disparate groups vying for attention. Teachers feel the need for much more support and respect if they are to be held responsible for the end product of education. They feel they are, by and large, professionals, who can get the job done if they are allowed to do so. But too many things are beyond the control of the teachers.

Recurring Themes

Insufficient or misallocated funding is, as teachers see it, the foremost problem facing education in Anchorage today. This includes, among other concerns, the funding for teacher salaries, for the implementation of smaller classes and the space to house them, for handling the disruptive students, and for dealing with the problems of the students from dysfunctional families.

Teachers believe the current spate of teacher-bashing by the general public nationwide is the result of a lack of understanding of the teacher's job, how the teacher actually handles time and how much of this time is expended throughout the year. They see the need for communicating more directly with the public.

Teachers admit there are those who should not be in teaching and are vocal about the problem and its solution, feeling that the universities and the certifying entities bear the brunt of the blame. Inadequately trained teachers should be weeded out in the selection process, preferably before they are graduated from Schools of Education.

Keeping up with developments so that they can best serve the students and the community is important to teachers. They want well-planned and productive in-service days. They question the adequacy of what they are getting. Perhaps better programs could be planned by the business community, possibly a forum where schools and employers could work together to analyze problems and help kids be better trained for the life they face.[33]

Anchorage Residents'/Teachers' Agreement

Those who responded to the residential study and the teachers who volunteered for the focus groups show a remarkable consistency of agreement on the issues facing the educational system in Anchorage as it moves toward the 21st century.

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[33] Paraphrased from Alaska's Youth: Ready for Work, p. 16, 3605 Artic Blvd., #770, Anchorage, Alaska 99503.

BACKGROUND

Two groups of teachers participated in this study, the first containing primarily secondary teachers; the second, largely elementary teachers. Because the discussions covered, in most cases, duplicate reactions and opinions, the material is written up as coming from "the teachers" without a breakdown by groups unless mandated by grade-level context. Direct quotations are used to add validity to the material.

PART I: WARM-UP

Each discussion began with the moderator's explaining the design, sample size, and demographic limitations of the mail-out survey of 948 Anchorage residents. Teachers then introduced themselves by first name only, identified their schools, and commented on their understanding of the WISE Project. Next, discussions revolved around how to recruit teachers for the task forces and on the deterrents to stronger education in Anchorage.

Knowledge Of The Project

Respondents showed a moderate level of information about the project, but, as would be expected from volunteers, a high interest. The teachers liked several things about the study, one being its scope; another, its broad-based approach. But comments ranged from "I like the community part," to "Here we go with another study which will probably go nowhere."

One skeptical participant, feared that "the tail will wag the dog : the business sector may be telling the professional educators what to do." This fear was expressed often throughout the sessions.

The Best Way To Involve Teachers In The Task Forces

May and early June are "push months" for educators, and they were unanimous in saying, "not before the end of school." In the second week of June, a Leadership Academy draws a lot of teachers so teachers prefer early-to mid-June for organizing the tasks forces. They want all teachers to be invited to participate. There is a consensus now that the project is important and the call to work during the summer months is not now a problem : "You will get those who are interested nearly any time." "Those who respond are active and interested."

Teachers want to choose the task force on which to work, perhaps noting two or three they would prefer. They like the idea of a letter inviting them to volunteer. However, the idea of a letter from the School District or from the Chamber of Commerce was not popular. "An invitation from the School District would be viewed with distrust." "Minimize the Chamber." A letter which indicates community involvement, possibly from a neutral third party, or a co-signed letter, was suggested. The letter should give available choices with topical areas, and, if possible, times and dates.

Since the respondents felt that knowing the different community sectors involved in the study would increase the trust factor, they suggested listing below the logo the names and affiliations of those working on the study. "Community and long-term beliefs are more important than school administration support. They come and go, and we'll still be here."

Deterrents To Stronger Education In Anchorage

One teacher summed up the deterrents to stronger education succinctly: "The curriculum is held in place by all types of outside forces which do not enable us to do within the system what we would like to do."

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Everyone agreed that the dysfunctional family, the bureaucratic structure, the lack of teacher empowerment, the political realities -- all work to impede progress. Among the comments were:

> "It's very frustrating to every one of us; it's not because of anything we are incapable of, but there are so many things that impact us. And the teacher gets the blame."
> "We are dealing with too many things beyond our control."
> "Adminstration fears community reaction and bad publicity."
> "So many people think they are experts because they have gone through the system. Teachers are not treated as experts, not given the respect they deserve."

Teachers feel their energies are misfocused. Really disruptive and troublesome students who are allowed repeated rule infractions, and the negativism expressed by these students, are taking up too much teacher time. There is a widespread "lack of family values and parental commitment to education" and "a lack of administrative support in controlling disruptive students." Also, there is a physical structure that disallows individuality, restraining the teachers even though they are expected to be everything to everybody. Typical comments included:

> "Businesses and teachers are not working together enough." (from an elementary teacher)
> "There is a vast difference in the children entering the schools now. Teachers are often shocked by the lack of preparation for school that the child displays."

PART II: EXPLORING TEACHER ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS REGARDING SELECT ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN THE ANCHORAGE RESIDENTIAL STUDY

For this section a handout was distributed on which participants reacted (on a scale of 1 - 5 with 1= Strongly Agree and 5= Strongly Disagree) to eight statements about educational issues. Open discussion on each statement examined the reasons for the answers. After each discussion the moderator explained how the residential survey participants (the general public) reported their reactions to similar statements.

A. Foreign languages should be introduced to students before grade three.

Teachers agreed that foreign languages should be introduced and were desirable if not mandatory in a shrinking world. If taught, foreign languages should be introduced before grade three. Some felt the program was needed but should be optional. " I feel it's an extra." Others liked the foreign language concept but wondered how it could be facilitated given the staffing problems and subsequent cost. "That's where the money would go."

Teachers and the Anchorage public agreed here.

B. Anchorage taxpayers would support an increased level of government spending for education if they knew specifically where the money would go.

Generally the educators agreed with this statement, indicating a somewhat surprising trust in the general public, who they feel maligns them. Discussion, however, clarified the approach on which they based their judgement. There were a few skeptics. Currently sharing textbooks and equipment, they felt that the priority should be the enrichment of the learning environment. To them statement B suggested or pre-supposed special programs advanced for special interest groups. They indicated that support for that kind of education depends on how the individual taxpayer perceives the need personally. "Decisions about needs should rest with the schools." Nodding their heads, a number of teachers agreed with this point.

One teacher who disagreed with the statement said, "The problem is paying anything to anyone for anyone." Another explained negative reactions as "a reaction to what happened in the last administration" (a reference to Dr. Coats), where administrative spending was perceived as unjustifiable.

Other teachers expressed a faith in the taxpayer's ability to come forward when the FACTS were presented and backed up by an honest rationale. Here the handling of the adminstration's defense of its budget came under fire. "The adminstration lies to the public." To paraphrase: Claims are made that any cuts will mean the curtailment of sports or music. If the cuts are made anyway, there is money found to fund sports and music, money taken from other programs or from textbooks or the like. Typical comments were:

> "Long-range planning needs to come now."
> "Decisions need to rest with us."
> "The public needs to know what money is coming from where - - how much from the federal government, how much from the state - - and what we should work for."

Several respondents indicated they felt better when told that 62% of the residents surveyed strongly agreed with the statement. Lots of smiles indicated the agreement was a surprise.

Teachers and the general public agreed.

C. <u>Public school teachers are overpaid.</u>

This was the item the teachers chose to discuss first. Nearly all of them strongly disagreed and were eager to express their views.

Teachers cited as support for their salaries such things as their training and responsibilites, the importance of their task, and their salaries as compared to those of other professionals. Typical comments were:

> "Teaching, for me, is an eleven month, all-encompassing job. I am not overpaid for what I put up with. The more I earn, the more I'm willing to give."
> "The public does not understand the responsibilities and time of the job."
> "The school district is no longer willing to pay top salaries for top people. We really need to look at this concept because I think it works."
> "Sometimes the public feels that anyone can teach [as witness the move towards using uncertified teachers] and is not willing to pay for professional teachers. It goes back to the public's not really knowing what a teacher does."

When told that the residential survey showed that more than half of the respondents did not feel teachers were overpaid, many grinned broadly and one teacher commented, "I find that comforting," while another said, "I will walk out of here feeling better." Others nodded and smiled in agreement. "It's encouraging."

Teachers were surprised to learn that Anchorage residents were in agreement with them.

D. <u>The responsibility for teaching basic skills such as writing, mathematics, and computer skills rests with the schools</u>.

Teachers were nearly unanimous in agreement here. Discussion centered around technology and computer skills. The statement, "Business and private enterprise are going to have to step in and help us here," gained strong support, expressed by comments and nodding of heads. Among the comments were:

> "It's too expensive for the school district."

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"Within the schools we are developing a have/have not situation. Those with larger budgets have the opportunity to purchase technology, whereas smaller schools do not have available funds."
"Teachers who know how to teach computer skills are needed."
"I totally agree we must teach computer skills, but let's get the money to do it. We're trying to do it with one computer for twenty-five kids. That's not teaching computer skills. It's showing them how to turn it on."
"We need time to learn to teach new things." (A plea for strong in-service training).

The residential survey and the teachers were in agreement. No surprises.

E. **The responsibility for teaching problem-solving and work-readiness skills rests with the schools.**

Teachers certainly agreed strongly with this statement. There was little discussion.

One elementary teacher pointed out that the statement probably refers to areas which are not really presented formally as skills before the fourth grade. Work-readiness skills were evidently being defined as those skills requisite for the work place, skills necessary to acquire and hold down jobs. This would be in line with the definitions in Alaska's Youth : Ready for Work study (pp. 24 & 25) proposed by the business community. Many of these skills are those defined as "basic:" writing, use of technology, mathematics (statement D), and inter-personal or social skills (statement F).

Respondents to the residential survey saw this as a school/home responsibility but the teachers felt quite strongly that the schools are responsible.

F. **The responsibility for teaching interpersonal or social skills such as good manners, honesty and integrity rests with the schools.**

There was a consensus of teacher disagreement with this statement. Teachers called for parent involvement, even more on the preschool and the elementary level than in the secondary schools, but still indicated that a home/school commitment is needed throughout the spectrum. Examples of the comments included:

"The dysfunctional society in which we live makes this a difficult area."
"Many families do not have the support system to deal with these things."
"Elementary schools can help."
"We feel we teach these things in everything we do."
"We must have parent involvement. It depends on everyone."
"The training should be primarly in the home."

The imitation factor was introduced. Adults need to set examples of good behavior, honesty and integrity for young people to emulate.

The general public found this to be the responsibility of the home and teachers agreed.

G. **Reinforcing a student's self-esteem can be facilitated through teacher training in sensitivity.**

Teachers seemed uncertain about this item, spreading their answers across the scale. Generally, however, elementary teachers agreed more strongly with the statement than did the secondary teachers.

All seem to agree that SELF-ESTEEM IS NECESSARY FOR EVERYONE, but teachers do not necessarily feel that the problem of reinforcing (or even introducing) it in students is easily solved. "Their self-esteem may be shot before they even come to us." -

In-service sessions on sensitivity may be desirable, but used alone they are an over-simplification.

The following set of quotations is *from elementary teachers*, who became quite emotional here as they referred to the "national ridicule" to which teachers are being subjected. Examples of the comments included:

> "There are cases were I cannot do much no matter how hard I try."
> "Teaching is developing a relationship with a child."
> "Studies show that self-esteem is contingent on the unconditional love of the primary care-giver so we, the teachers, can't do much. In a number of cases the teachers are the primary care-givers so I'm not saying teachers shouldn't give it a try." (Both these statements elicited a good deal of head nodding.)
> "It's a caring function. It is not holding back discipline. You can discipline. The student knows if you don't care. It's a matter of equal treatment."
> "By not limiting behavior, you may suggest you don't care. Kids need discipline."

These statements are from *secondary teachers:*

> "There are those who don't care."
> "Regarding in-service, there should be some evaluation of those who attend. It is an administrative responsibility to admonish those who sit in the back and laugh."
> "Sensitivity training should be required for certification."
> "I wouldn't call it sensitivity training. I'd call it a direct program on self-esteem and discipline. I think the community would buy into self-esteem with teachers. It's common ground." (This statement elicited responses such as " I agree with that." and other evidences of strong approval.)

Further emotional discussion developed as teachers zeroed in on their own need for self-esteem and the fact that this is largely overlooked by those who could be giving them support.

> "ALL of us need self-esteem."

WHEN TEACHER MORALE IS LOW, AND THEY'RE COPING WITH EVERYTHING THEY CAN COPE WITH, THEY DON'T HAVE MORE TO GIVE.

H. <u>Teachers should be required to take periodic competency or proficiency tests</u>.

As expected teachers were leaning heavily toward the disagreement end of the scale in their opposition to competency or proficiency tests but mainly because they are uncertain as to what would be tested and how. Some of them, however, did support the concept if fair tests could be formulated. Teachers felt that what they perceived as strong public support for such testing might be the result of parents' not being able to choose their children's teachers. There appears to be a "terrible fear " involved in this issue. Someone pointed out that in Texas the practice "removed minorities very quickly."

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Competency or proficiency testing is an emotional issue; teachers stressed again that they are scapegoats for the bureaucracies. Teachers do not deny that there are incompetents in the system, but they see the initial screening of potential teachers as the key to this issue. The universities and accreditation process, they say, are not doing the job.

Another variable is that teachers in Anchorage are often assigned to teach in areas outside their expertise. Teachers must be teaching in their major areas to be held accountable. "Responsibility here needs to be with the school district."

Teachers question why potential teachers, not adequately prepared, are passed on through by the universities here in Anchorage despite "do not hire" recommendations from the supervisory teachers with whom they practice-teach in the public schools. And how did they get so far in the first place?

PART III: WRAP UP

If time permitted, Part III addressed items not previously discussed. Items reserved for this section were

Reducing Class Size
Preschool in Public Schools
Providing Before and After-School Care.

Reducing Class Size

There appears to be a general agreement that class size is a key issue in education today. But reducing class size is expensive, being governed by infrastructure and staffing expense. And special programs, many of them government-mandated, add to this burden.

Locally, teachers feel that the numbers presented by the school district do not reveal an accurate picture of class size. "Actually the numbers are creeping up again." They claim there is statistical manipulation. For instance, "When principals and librarians are counted into computations, the true pupil/teacher ratio (PTR) will fall noticeably." Principals and librarians do not have classes.

Including Preschool in Public Schools and Providing Before and After-School Care

The cost of such programs is a major consideration. In preschool classes there must be fewer children per classroom.

One teacher's school, not in Anchorage, had both arrangements. She cited the danger of warehousing. "My experience is that a number of students are put in a very small space, and they come to school unprepared. Before and after school the rules are different. They are allowed to run around the teacher's lounge and everywhere else, whereas during school hours the rules get fuzzy. The kids come to school not as ready to learn." Typical comments were:

"They want to have a family, but they want someone else to do the work for them."
"You run into the problem of putting toddlers with bigger bodies so we would need an increase in classrooms, especially those designed for smaller children."
"If employers did it for their working mothers and fathers, would the children of non-employed parents be offered the same privileges?"
"We need to get back to teaching, and somebody else needs to take the babysitting responsibility off our shoulders."

In Search of Excellence
Telephone-Survey-of-Anchorage Businesses Report[34]

Executive Summary

Employee Readiness for Work
Although most firms expected applicants to have general knowledge, some oral communication skills, and a basic level of enthusiasm, only slightly more than half (56%) expected applicants to have all the skills needed to perform a particular job, which suggests that further training is necessary.

Firms thought many applicants were most deficient in specific areas:

- *Services, finance, insurance, real estate, mining and the gas and oil industries found applicants to be lacking in general knowledge.
- *Mining and the gas and oil industries found applicants lacking the ability to express themselves orally.
- *Trade and services found potential employees lacking enthusiasm.
- *Larger firms (100+ employees) saw deficiencies in general knowledge, oral expression, and the needed level of enthusiasm.
- *Firms with eleven to twenty-five employees had trouble locating applicants with the unique skills required in their businesses.

Four out of nine firms which actually had employees (44%) contended that it had been more difficult now to find qualified employees than in the previous five years.

Offerings by Businesses in On-the-Job Training
About three-quarters of firms surveyed provide training to their new-hires and existing employees in specific skills for the job.

More than a quarter of the firms found it necessary to train new-hires because their product or service was unique or specialized. Another one-quarter claimed to offer new-hires training in motivation and problem solving skills.

Although "deficiencies in the specific skills of the job" was the leading concern for all industries when considering new-hires, it was not so great a concern for mining, oil, gas, manufacturing, and construction firms. In general, these companies are finding new-hires with the skills they require of new employees.

Finance, insurance, and real estate firms had the least problem with finding employees with the skills unique to their service or product. But almost half of the firms in the utility, communication, and transportation businesses found new-hires deficient in these unique skill areas.

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[34] Please see Appendix B, page 189 for a discussion of the Research Objectives, Survey Sample and Methodology of the Telephone Survey to Anchorage Businesses.

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Firms with twenty-six or more employees have a greater tendency to offer training to existing employees. As the size of the firm increases, the percentage of firms offering training increases.

The type of additional training given by firms to their employees is:

- *informal on-the-job training (96%),
- *seminars (66%),
- *formal classes (42%), and
- *on-site training by contracted vendors (26%).

Manufacturing and construction firms are the least likely to offer training of any type.

Cooperative Programs with Schools

Half of the firms surveyed have not participated in any of these programs. Those programs in which businesses most often participated were on-site business tours for students (thirty-seven companies); programs recruiting employees to lecture in classrooms (thirty-three companies), and junior achievement (twenty-seven companies).

At least half of the firms in (1) services, (2) finance, insurance, and real estate, and (3) utilities, communications, and transportation participate in some cooperative programs between the business community and the schools.

Non-profit organizations are twice as likely as profit-oriented firms to participate in some program which links the business community with the school system.

The two factors which led the majority of firms to become involved with some school program related more to general community concerns than immediate to bottom-line payoffs. Two-thirds (69%) said they had "a desire to do something for the community."

More than half of the companies involved wanted "to increase interest in the field among students." Slightly more than one-third related involvement in such programs to creating better entry-level workers.

Findings

The following pages contain the research findings in the order in which questions were asked on the survey. Included in the presentation of each response is a summary or example of any significant findings, followed by relevant frequency tables. Frequency tables list categories of response by the actual number of responses and include the percentage of the total in each category. Some frequency tables are combined to describe two pieces of data that are related in some way. This type of analysis is called crosstabulation.

Most often, crosstabulations were employed to provide a richer understanding of the information by looking at those companies surveyed within the context of

profit vs. nonprofit,

big business vs. small business, and

type of industry, such as service vs. trade.

Except where specifically noted, only findings and tables that are statistically significant are included in this report. All percentages in the narrative are rounded to the nearest whole percentage point.

Question 1A

Nature of the business or organization.

Excluding government, the 375 firms and organizations surveyed represented well Anchorage's major industries and employers. The largest industries were services and trade, accounting for almost two-thirds (66%) of the non-governmental employment. Smaller industries were also represented in proportion to the actual percentage of total employment in Anchorage.

Table 1A: Sector and Type of Business

	Count	Percent of Responcents
SERVICES	129	34.4% *
Business services	29	7.7%
Social services	28	7.5%
Hotel, Motel	25	6.7%
Health	24	6.4%
Education	2	.5%
Miscellaneous	21	5.6%
FINANCE, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE	34	9.1% *
Finance	14	3.7%
Insurance	11	2.9%
Real Estate	9	2.4%
MINING, GAS & OIL	14	3.7% *
MANUFACTORING	10	2.7% *
CONSTRUCTION	22	5.9% *
UTILITIES, COMMUNICATION, TRANSPORTATION	49	13.1% *
Communication	24	6.4%
Transportation	23	6.1%
Utilities	2	.5%
TRADE	117	31.2% *
Food	33	8.8%
Household	29	7.7%
Clothing	28	7.5%
Entertainment, Miscellaneous	18	4.8%
Auto	9	2.4%
TOTAL	375	100.0% **

Question 1B

Are you a profit or nonprofit business?

Nine out of ten employers (91%) sampled were businesses operating for profit.

Table 1B: Profit or Nonprofit

	Count	Percent
Profit	342	91.2%
Nonprofit	33	8.8%
TOTAL	375	100.0%

Question 2.

Roughly, how many employees do you have working in Anchorage?

Most typically (in 47% of the cases) the Anchorage company surveyed was a small business employing from one to ten people. At the other extreme, large businesses employing 100+ people represented one of every twelve companies surveyed (8%).

One in ten of the sampled firms were one-person operations, with no employees.

Table 2: How Many Employees Work in Anchorage

	Count	Percent
Employees working in Anchorage		
none	39	10.4%
1 to 10	177	47.2%
11 to 25	72	19.2%
26 to 50	36	9.6%
51 to 100	20	5.3%
101 to 500	24	6.4%
over 500	7	1.9%
TOTAL	375	100.0%

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Question 3.

In general, has it become more difficult to find qualified employees in the past five years?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Maybe, depends on area
4. Finding that people are over-qualified

Of the firms who had employees, 44% said that it was more difficult now to find qualified people than in the previous five years. However, almost as many (43%) claimed that it had become no more difficult.

Only four companies reported finding applicants to be over-qualified.

Table 3-1: Has It Become Harder to Find Qualified Employees

	Count	Percent
Hiring has become:		
more difficult	147	43.8%
no more difficult	143	42.6%
depends on the job or season.	30	8.0%
other *	10	2.7%
No answer	6	1.8%
TOTAL	336	100.0%

4 respondents added that they found applicants over-qualified.

* Other answers:

4 Haven't hired anyone in the last 5 years
4 Have only been in business a short time
2 It's hard to hire employees in general

Two areas: (1) mining, gas, and oil and (2) utilities, communications, and transportation did not have so much difficulty finding qualified employees as did other Anchorage industries.

In the trade industry, however, the majority of firms said locating qualified employees had been more difficult.

Table 3-2: Crosstabulation of Difficulty in Finding Qualified Employees by Sector

	Sector										TOTAL	
	Services		Finance, Insurance, Real Estate		Mining, Gas & Oil		Manufacture, Construction		Utility, Communicate, Transport		Trade			
Hiring is:														
more difficult	51	48.1%	11	50.0%	3	21.4%	12	48.0%	14	31.1%	56	51.9%	147	45.9%
no more difficult	46	43.4%	9	40.9%	10	71.4%	13	52.0%	23	51.1%	42	38.9%	143	44.7%
Depends	9	8.5%	2	9.1%	1	7.1%			8	17.8%	10	9.3%	30	9.4%
TOTAL	106	100%	22	100%	14	100%	25	100%	45	100%	108	100%	320	100%

Column percentages

Question 4.

In which of the following areas do you find applicants to be lacking?

1. **General knowledge, such as reading, writing, arithmetic or spelling**
2. **An ability to express themselves verbally**
3. **A level of enthusiasm, interest or motivation**
4. **Problem-solving skills**
5. **Specific skills of the job as they might apply to any company in the same business**
6. **A unique service or product in which only your company specializes**

Applicants for jobs in Anchorage come ill-prepared for the business world! There were a significant number of firms (from 29% to 40%) which found applicants lacking in almost all of the listed areas.

Thirty-seven percent claimed applicants were lacking enthusiasm, interest and motivation while nearly equal numbers of employers (33%) found applicants to be lacking in both general knowledge (such as reading, writing, arithmetic and spelling) and problem-solving skills.

Only one in five firms said applicants were not lacking in any area.

Table 4-1: In Which of the Following Areas Do You Find Applicants Lacking

	Number of Yes Replies	Percent of Respondents
Applicants are lacking in:		
General knowledge (reading, writing, arithmatic, spelling)...	112	33.3%
An ability to express themselves verbally.....	97	28.9%
A level of enthusiasm, interest or motivation.....	124	36.9%
Problem solving skills.....	111	33.0%
Specific skills of the job, as it might apply to any company.	135	40.2%
A unique service or product in which your company specializes	63	18.8%
None.....	73	21.7%
Don't know.....	1	.3%
No answer.....	6	1.8%
Total Respondents.....	336	

Question 4 (Cont'd)

Probably due to widely varying expectations, Anchorage industries were quite different in the areas in which they found applicants lacking. Deficiencies of general knowledge were of greater concern to firms in services, finance, insurance, real estate, mining, and the gas and oil industries. Forty-three percent of the firms sampled in mining, gas, and oil found applicants lacking in the ability to express themselves.

As might be expected, trade and services saw the level of enthusiasm they desired lacking in applicants. Half of the manufacturing and construction firms said applicants did not have specific job skills they were after.

Table 4-2: Crosstabulation of Where Applicants Are Found Lacking by Sector

	Sector						Total "Agree" Responses
	Services	Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	Mining, Gas & Oil	Manufacture, Construction	Utility, Communicate, Transport	Trade	
Applicants lack:							
General knowledge	40.0%	44.0%	42.9%	15.4%	32.6%	27.3%	33.3%
Ability to express themselves	36.5%	24.0%	42.9%	15.4%	37.0%	20.0%	28.9%
Level of enthusiasm	42.6%	24.0%	28.6%	34.6%	26.1%	40.0%	36.9%
Problem solving skills	36.5%	24.0%	14.3%	15.4%	30.4%	39.1%	33.0%
Specific skills of the job	42.6%	40.0%	35.7%	50.0%	30.4%	40.0%	40.2%
Skills unique to product	21.7%	4.0%	21.4%	7.7%	28.3%	17.3%	18.8%
None	13.0%	36.0%	35.7%	38.5%	21.7%	21.8%	21.7%
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	115	25	14	26	46	110	336

Larger firms, with 100+ employees, were more likely to say general knowledge, verbal expression and the needed level of enthusiasm were lacking in applicants.

On the other hand, firms with eleven to twenty-five employees found more difficulty than did other-sized firms in attracting applicants with the job skills unique to the services they offered or the product they produced.

Table 4-3: Crosstabulation of Where Applicants Are Found Lacking by Size of Company

	Employees in Anchorage				Total "Agree" Responses
	1 to 10	11 to 25	26 to 100	over 100	
Applicants lack:					
General knowledge	33.9%	31.9%	28.6%	41.9%	33.3%
Ability to express themselves	28.2%	22.2%	32.1%	41.9%	28.9%
Level of enthusiasm	36.7%	33.3%	28.6%	61.3%	36.9%
Problem solving skills	29.9%	36.1%	39.3%	32.3%	33.0%
Specific skills of the job	38.4%	45.8%	39.3%	38.7%	40.2%
Skills unique to product	17.5%	22.2%	19.6%	16.1%	18.8%
None	23.7%	23.6%	17.9%	12.9%	21.7%
Total Respondents	177	72	56	31	336

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Question 5.

Do you provide training to new-hires in any of the areas just mentioned?

1. **General knowledge, such as reading, writing, arithmetic or spelling**
2. **An ability to express themselves verbally**
3. **A level of enthusiasm, interest or motivation**
4. **Problem-solving skills**
5. **Specific skills of the job as they might apply to any company in the same business**
6. **A unique service or product in which only your company specializes**

Training is a must! More than three-fourths (78%) of firms provided training for their new hires in the specific skills of the job as they might apply to any company in that industry. More than a quarter of the firms found it necessary to train new hires because their product or service was unique or specialized.

More than one-quarter of the companies surveyed claimed to offer new hires training in motivation and problem solving skills.

Table 5-1: Do You Provide Training in These Areas to New-Hires

	Number of Yes Replies	Percent of Respondents
Train new hires in:		
General knowledge (reading, writing, arithmatic, spelling)...	38	11.3%
An ability to express themselves verbally.....	63	18.8%
A level of enthusiasm, interest or motivation.....	90	26.8%
Problem so ving skills.....	79	23.5%
Specific skills of the job, as it might apply to any company.	262	78.0%
A unique service or product in which your company specializes	95	28.3%
None.....	55	16.4%
Don't know.....	2	.6%
No answer.....	1	.3%
Total Respondents.....	336	

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Questions 5 (Cont'd)

Although "deficiencies in the specific skills of the job" was the leading concern for all industries when considering new-hires, it was not so great a concern for mining, oil, gas, manufacturing, and construction firms. In general, these companies are finding new-hires with the skills they require of new employees.

Finance, insurance, and real estate firms had the least problem with finding employees with the skills unique to their service or product. But almost half of the firms in the utility, communication, and transportation businesses found new-hires deficient in these unique skill areas.

Table 5-2: Crosstabulation of Areas in Which New-Hires Are Given Training by Sector

	Sector					Total "Agree" Responses
	Services	Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	Mining, Manufacture, Construction	Utility, Communicate, Transport	Trade	
Train new hires in:						
General knowledge	12.2%	20.0%	2.5%	15.2%	10.0%	11.3%
Ability to express themselves	27.8%	32.0%		17.4%	13.6%	18.8%
Level of enthusiasm	28.7%	36.0%	2.5%	13.0%	37.3%	26.8%
Problem solving skills	27.8%	24.0%	7.5%	23.9%	24.5%	23.5%
Specific skills of the job	79.1%	76.0%	60.0%	80.4%	82.7%	78.0%
Skills unique to product	27.8%	8.0%	32.5%	47.8%	23.6%	28.3%
None	13.9%	24.0%	27.5%	10.9%	15.5%	16.4%
Total Respondents	115	25	40	46	110	336

More of the larger firms said they must give new-hires training in areas of general knowledge, the ability to express themselves, and in specific skills of the job.

Intermediate-sized firms, with twenty-six to one hundred employees, had a greater need to give new-hires training in the skills unique to their services or products.

Table 5-3: Crosstabulation of Areas in Which New-Hires Are Given Training by Size of Company

	Employees in Anchorage				Total "Agree" Responses
	1 to 10	11 to 25	26 to 100	over 100	
Train new hires in:					
General knowledge	9.6%	12.5%	8.9%	22.6%	11.3%
Ability to express themselves	13.0%	20.8%	26.8%	32.3%	18.8%
Level of enthusiasm	26.0%	27.8%	30.4%	22.6%	26.8%
Problem solving skills	19.8%	20.8%	33.9%	32.3%	23.5%
Specific skills of the job	72.3%	83.3%	83.9%	87.1%	78.0%
Skills unique to product	26.0%	27.8%	35.7%	29.0%	28.3%
None	23.2%	11.1%	7.1%	6.5%	16.4%
Total Respondents	177	72	56	31	336

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Question 5b.

Do you provide training in any of these areas for your existing employees?

1. **General knowledge, such as reading, writing, arithmetic or spelling.**
2. **An ability to express themselves verbally.**
3. **A level of enthusiasm, interest or motivation.**
4. **Problem-solving skills**
5. **Specific skills of the job as they might apply to any company in the same business.**
6. **A unique service or product in which only your company specializes.**

In general, companies did not offer their existing employees any more training than they did new employees. The training areas available to employees were almost identical to those areas offered to new-hires -- with training in specific skills of the job, as it might apply to any company -- offered most frequently by 73% of the firms.

Table 5B-1: Do You Provide Training in These Areas to Existing Employees

	Number of Yes Replies	Percent of Respondents
Train existing employees in:		
General knowledge (reading, writing, arithmatic, spelling)...	32	9.5%
An ability to express themselves verbally.....	53	15.8%
A level of enthusiasm, interest or motivation.....	80	23.8%
Problem solving skills.....	76	22.6%
Specific skills of the job, as it might apply to any company.	244	72.6%
A unique service or product in which your company specializes	106	31.5%
None.....	67	19.9%
Don't know.....	2	.6%
No answer.....	3	.9%
Total Respondents.....	336	

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Question 5B (Cont'd)

More of the firms in the finance, insurance, and real estate sectors gave existing employees training in all areas except skills unique to their service or product. In contrast, more than 40% of the firms in (1) mining, gas, and oil, (2) manufacturing and construction, and (3) utilities, communications, and transportation gave existing employees training in unique skill areas.

Although a slight majority (53%) of the firms in mining, gas, oil, manufacturing, and construction did train existing employees in specific jobs skills, they did it far less than all other industries.

Table 5B-2: Crosstabulation of Areas in Which Existing Employees Are Given Training by Sector

	Sector					Total "Agree" Responses
	Services	Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	Mining, Manufacture, Construction	Utility, Communicate, Transport	Trade	
Train existing employees in:						
General knowledge	13.9%	24.0%		13.0%	3.6%	9.5%
Ability to express themselves	21.7%	36.0%		15.2%	10.9%	15.8%
Level of enthusiasm	28.7%	44.0%		8.7%	29.1%	23.8%
Problem solving skills	27.8%	28.0%	5.0%	21.7%	22.7%	22.6%
Specific skills of the job	71.3%	88.0%	52.5%	78.3%	75.5%	72.6%
Skills unique to product	30.4%	16.0%	42.5%	43.5%	27.3%	31.5%
None	20.0%	12.0%	27.5%	15.2%	20.9%	19.9%
Total Respondents	115	25	40	46	119	336

In all areas, firms with twenty-six employees or more had a greater tendency to have given training to existing employees.

Table 5B-3: Crosstabulation of Areas in Which Existing Employees Are Given Training by Size of Company

	Employees in Anchorage				Total "Agree" Responses
	1 to 10	11 to 25	26 to 100	over 100	
Train existing employees in:					
General knowledge	5.6%	11.1%	12.5%	22.6%	9.5%
Ability to express themselves	10.2%	15.3%	28.6%	25.8%	15.8%
Level of enthusiasm	20.9%	23.6%	32.1%	25.8%	23.8%
Problem solving skills	16.4%	22.2%	39.3%	29.0%	22.6%
Specific skills of the job	63.8%	77.8%	83.9%	90.3%	72.6%
Skills unique to product	31.1%	27.8%	37.5%	32.3%	31.5%
None	28.2%	18.1%	5.4%	3.2%	19.9%
Total Respondents	177	72	56	31	336

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Question 5C.

Which of these areas do you feel the applicants should come to work with?

1. **General knowledge, such as reading, writing, arithmetic or spelling.**
2. **An ability to express themselves verbally.**
3. **A level of enthusiasm, interest or motivation.**
4. **Problem-solving skills**
5. **Specific skills of the job as they might apply to any company in the same business.**
6. **A unique service or product in which only your company specializes.**

Most firms expected applicants to have general knowledge--the three R's--some oral communication skills, and a basic level of enthusiasm and motivation. Three out of four also expected applicants to have problem-solving skills.

Only 56% of employers believe that applicants should come to work with all of the skills needed to perform a particular job. Many firms expect to do training in specific skills of the job, and most expect to train in skills that are particularly unique to their service or product.

Table 5C: Which of These Areas Should Applicants Already Know

	Number of Yes Replies	Percent of Respondents
Applicants should know:		
General knowledge (reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling)...	310	92.3%
An ability to express themselves verbally...	296	88.1%
A level of enthusiasm, interest or motivation...	296	88.1%
Problem solving skills...	250	74.4%
Specific skills of the job, as it might apply to any compan...	193	57.4%
A unique service or product that your company specializes i...	46	13.7%
Other *	19	5.7%
None	9	2.7%
Don't know	2	.6%
No answer	1	.3%
Total Respondents	336	100.0%

* Other answers:

3 Honesty & ethics/ Integrity /Honesty & work ethic
2 Reliability/ Responsibility

2 Hospitality/ Gregariousness
1 Be able to work well with all kinds of people & professional bearing
1 People knowledge

1 Organization
1 Common sense
1 Ability at team work
1 Goal establishment and achievement
1 Personal hygiene, cleanliness

1 Know goals of the company and whether they match his or her own
1 Knowing how to interview

1 High school graduate
1 AA degree or better
1 Knowledge of the local area

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Question 6.

Which of the following types of training do you offer your employees (employees now working for your company)?[35]

1. **Informal on-the-job training**
2. **Formal classes conducted by your company**
3. **Seminars pesented by outside organizations or schools**
4. **On-site training by contracted vendor**

Other than "informal on-the-job training," the majority of companies sent employees outside the company for training. A full two-thirds (66%) sent employees to seminars conducted by outside organizations or schools. One-quarter of the firms (26%) contracted with a vendor to come on-site to train.

Almost all of the firms offered informal on-the-job training. Formal classes conducted by the company were offered by 42% of the firms.

Table 6-1: Types of Training

	Number of Yes Replies	Percent of Respondents
Types of training offered:		
Informal on-the-job training	324	96.4%
Formal classes conducted by your company	141	42.0%
Seminars presented by outside organizations or schools	220	65.5%
On-site training by contracted vendor	88	26.2%
None of the above	6	1.8%
Total Respondents	336	

The majority of firms in utilities, communications, and transportation (67%) and in finance, insurance, and real estate (60%) offered formal classes to their employees. The mining, oil, and gas industry, along with manufacturing and construction firms, were the least likely to contract with an outside vendor to offer training. Aside from informal, on-the-job training, manufacturing and construction firms were the least likely to offer training of any kind.

Table 6-2: Crosstabulation of Types of Training Offered by Sector

	Sector						Total "Agree" Responses
	Services	Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	Mining, Gas & Oil	Manufacture, Construction	Utility, Communicate, Transport	Trade	
Types of training offered:							
Informal on-the-job	95.7%	96.0%	100.0%	100.0%	97.8%	95.5%	96.4%
Formal classes	36.5%	60.0%	42.9%	15.4%	67.4%	39.1%	42.0%
Seminars	71.3%	88.0%	78.6%	53.8%	78.3%	50.0%	65.5%
On-site by contracted vendor	35.7%	32.0%	7.1%		26.1%	23.6%	26.2%
None of the above	1.7%				2.2%	2.7%	1.8%
Total Respondents	115	25	14	26	46	110	336

[35] Please see pages 175 through 180 for verbatim responses.

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Question 6 (Cont'd)

For all types of training, as the size of the firm increases, the percentage of firms offering the training increases.

Table 6-3: Crosstabulation of Types of Training Offered by Size of Company

	Employees in Anchorage				Total "Agree" Responses
	1 to 10	11 to 25	26 to 100	over 100	
Types of training offered:					
Informal on-the-job	94.9%	97.2%	98.2%	100.0%	96.4%
Formal classes	26.0%	34.7%	73.2%	93.5%	42.0%
Seminars	55.9%	76.4%	73.2%	80.6%	65.5%
On-site by contracted vendor	18.6%	26.4%	35.7%	51.6%	26.2%
None of the above	3.4%				1.8%
Total Respondents	177	72	56	31	336

Non-profit organizations were more likely than profit-making firms to have offered employees all types of training.

Table 6-4: Crosstabulation of Types of Training Offered by Profit vs. Nonprofit Company

	Company is:		Total "Agree" Responses
	Profit	Nonprofit	
Types of training offered:			
Informal on-the-job	96.0%	100.0%	96.4%
Formal classes	40.3%	57.6%	42.0%
Seminars	63.4%	84.8%	65.5%
On-site by contracted vendor	23.1%	54.5%	26.2%
None of the above	2.0%		1.8%
Total Respondents	303	33	336

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Question 6A

Formal classes conducted by your company

a) where?

1. **in Anchorage**
2. **Outside**
3. **both**

Two-thirds of the firms who offered and conducted formal classes did so in Anchorage. In fact, only one in twenty of these firms exclusively had employees go outside of Alaska for this training.

Table 6A: Location of Classes Conducted by Company

	Count	Percent
Formal classes:		
Held classes	141	42.0%
Do not	195	58.0%
TOTAL	336	100.0%
Location of classes:		
In Anchorage	96	68.1%
Outside	7	5.0%
both	31	22.0%
neither	7	5.0%
TOTAL	141	100.0%

Question 6B

If employees take job-related courses or attend job-related seminars, do you provide

a) time off for all employees, for some, or for none?
b) overtime pay for all employees, for some, or for none?
c) reimbursment for costs, partial costs, or all costs?

The majority of firms gave time off to all employees who took job-related courses or seminars (64%). However, most employers did not pay the employee for those hours spent attending such training (75%).

Over half of the companies reimbursed all of their employees for costs of such courses or seminars.

Table 6B-1: Compensation for Job-Related Courses

	For all employees		For some		For none	
Compensation for:						
time off:	214	64.1%	41	12.3%	79	23.7%
overtime pay:	65	19.5%	18	5.4%	251	75.1%

Percentages are of each row. 2 respondents did not answer the questions.

	All costs		Partial costs		No costs	
Reimbursment for costs:	184	55.1%	58	17.4%	92	27.5%

Percentages are of each row. 2 respondents did not answer the questions.

Question 6B (Cont'd)

Firms in trade industries were less likely than those in other industries to have given compensation, either in time off or in some reimbursement for costs, to employees who took job-related courses or seminars.

Firms in manufacturing and construction and those in finance, insurance, and real estate were the least likely to give overtime pay in such instances.

Table 6B-2: Crosstabulation of Compensation for Job-Related Courses or Seminars by Sector

	Sector										TOTAL	
	Services		Finance, Insurance, Real Estate		Mining, Gas & Oil		Manufacture, Construction		Utility, Communicate, Transport		Trade			
Time off:														
for all employees..	82	71.9%	24	96.0%	11	78.6%	17	65.4%	32	69.6%	48	44.0%	214	64.1%
for some.....	16	14.0%			1	7.1%	3	11.5%	7	15.2%	14	12.8%	41	12.3%
for none.....	16	14.0%	1	4.0%	2	14.3%	6	23.1%	7	15.2%	47	43.1%	79	23.7%
Overtime pay:														
for all employees..	21	18.4%	3	12.0%	3	21.4%	2	7.7%	10	21.7%	26	23.9%	65	19.5%
for some.....	8	7.0%							3	6.5%	7	6.4%	18	5.4%
for none.....	85	74.6%	22	88.0%	11	78.6%	24	92.3%	33	71.7%	76	69.7%	251	75.1%
Reinbursment for:														
all costs.....	67	58.8%	19	76.0%	12	85.7%	13	50.0%	25	54.3%	48	44.0%	184	55.1%
partial costs.....	17	14.9%	5	20.0%			7	26.9%	14	30.4%	15	13.8%	58	17.4%
no costs.....	30	26.3%	1	4.0%	2	14.3%	6	23.1%	7	15.2%	46	42.2%	92	27.5%
TOTAL.....	114	100%	25	100%	14	100%	26	100%	46	100%	109	100%	334	100%

Column percentages

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Question 6B (Cont'd)

More of the largest firms (100+ employees) gave compensation of all types to employees who took job-related courses or seminars.

Table 6B-3: Crosstabulation of Compensation for Job-Related Courses or Seminars by Size of Company

	Employees in Anchorage								TOTAL	
	1 to 10		11 to 25		26 to 100		over 100			
Time off:										
for all employees..	110	62.5%	41	57.7%	38	67.9%	25	80.6%	214	64.1%
for some.....	15	8.5%	18	25.4%	6	10.7%	2	6.5%	41	12.3%
for none.....	51	29.0%	12	16.9%	12	21.4%	4	12.9%	79	23.7%
Overtime pay:										
for all employees..	32	18.2%	13	18.3%	12	21.4%	8	25.8%	65	19.5%
for some.....	4	2.3%	5	7.0%	7	12.5%	2	6.5%	18	5.4%
for none.....	140	79.5%	53	74.6%	37	66.1%	21	67.7%	251	75.1%
Reinbursment for:										
all costs.....	87	49.7%	42	58.3%	31	55.4%	24	77.4%	184	55.1%
partial costs.....	25	14.3%	14	19.4%	13	23.2%	6	19.4%	58	17.4%
no costs.....	63	36.0%	16	22.2%	12	21.4%	1	3.2%	92	27.5%
TOTAL.....	175	100%	72	100%	56	100%	31	100%	334	100%

Column percentages

Question 6B (Cont'd)

Non-profit organizations were more likely than profit-making firms to give employees time off for training and reimburse their costs.

In contrast, profit-making companies were far more likely to use overtime pay as a compensation for training.

Table 6B-4: Crosstabulation of Compensation for Job-Related Courses or Seminars by Profit or Non-Profit Company

	Company is:				TOTAL	
	Profit		Nonprofit			
Time off:						
for all employees..	192	63.8%	22	66.7%	214	64.1%
for some.....	34	11.3%	7	21.2%	41	12.3%
for none.....	75	24.9%	4	12.1%	79	23.7%
Overtime pay:						
for all employees..	63	20.9%	2	6.1%	65	19.5%
for some.....	17	5.6%	1	3.0%	18	5.4%
for none.....	221	73.4%	30	90.9%	251	75.1%
Reinbursment for:						
all costs.....	163	54.2%	21	63.6%	184	55.1%
partial costs.....	50	16.6%	8	24.2%	58	17.4%
no costs.....	88	29.2%	4	12.1%	92	27.5%
TOTAL.....	301	100%	33	100%	334	100%

Column percentages

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Question T-1

Does anyone in your business participate in any cooperative program with the schools, such as

1. **The School-Business Partnership Program (Adopt-a-School)**
2. **Serving on a school curriculum committee**
3. **Junior Achievement**
4. **The Vocational Internship Program, (VIP)**
5. **A Mentorship Program**
6. **On-site business tours for students**
7. **A program which recruits employees to lecture in the classroom**

Half of the firms surveyed have not participated in any of these programs. Twenty percent reported involvement in some other program linking the business and education communities.

At least some of the firms had participated in each of the programs listed. Those programs in which businesses most often participated were: on-site business tours to students (thirty-seven companies); programs recruiting employees to lecture in classrooms (thirty-three companies), and Junior Achievement (twenty-seven companies).

Table I.1: Does Your Business Participate in Any of These Programs

	Number of Yes Replies	Percent of Respondents
Company participates in:		
On-site business tours to students	38	11.3%
A program which recruits employees to lecture in classrooms	38	11.3%
Junior Achievement	28	8.3%
Vocational Internship Program (VIP)	21	6.3%
A mentorship program	13	3.9%
Serving on a school curriculum committee	10	3.0%
School Business Partnership Program (adopt-a-school)	5	1.5%
Other *	68	20.2%
Never heard of any of these programs	34	10.1%
None	166	49.4%
Don't know	4	1.2%
No answer	2	.6%
Total Respondents	336	100.0%

* Other answers:

Table I-1 (Cont'd): Does Your Business Participate in Any of These Programs--"Other" Answers

8 Career center interns
1 Career center interns, Travel & tourism classes

1 University practicum - "storefront school"
3 Private internship - university level
3 UAA internship
1 PHD interns, MA interns, Residencies

7 High school credit-work program/ High school internship
1 Hiring through high schools

7 SAVE

3 JTPA
1 JTPA, STEP
1 JTPA, nine star
1 JTPA, University presentations, Summer enrichment program

1 Rural school internships

1 Close-Up
1 Seminar "Aces" (national program)
1 IBEW apprenticeship program
1 AOGA teacher workshops
1 AK minerals education program
1 Boys & Girls Scouts' program
1 Burger King academey project - AVAIL
1 JLT

1 Career days & health days at schools
1 Debate team at high schools
1 Consulting for ASD teacher courses
1 Office skills job training

1 College group evaluation
1 Advising college stucents on projects
1 Curriculum trainings - private college
1 University engineering program
1 Social worker program at UAA

2 Travel agent school lectures
1 Lecture at adult community schools

1 Partners in literacy program
1 Dept of Education program for the developmentally disabled
1 Summer handicap programs (recreational)
1 Working with retarded people, hiring them
1 ARCA
1 Outreach
1 Drug related programs

1 Wally Sacks' food drive (Feast or Famine)
1 Food drives
1 Don't know

Question TI (Cont'd)

About half of the firms in (1) services, (2) finance, insurance, and real estate, and (3) utilities, communication, and transportation had participated in at least one of the listed programs.

The lowest participation rates were for mining, gas, oil, manufacturing, and construction.

Table TI.2: Crosstabulation of Participation in Program by Sector

	Sector										TOTAL	
	Services		Finance, Insurance, Real Estate		Mining, Manufacture, Construction		Utility, Communicate, Transport		Trade			
Participates	56	48.7%	13	52.0%	11	27.5%	22	47.8%	41	37.3%	143	42.6%
Does not	59	51.3%	12	48.0%	29	72.5%	24	52.2%	69	62.7%	193	57.4%
TOTAL	115	100%	25	100%	40	100%	46	100%	110	100%	336	100%

Column percentages

As the size of the firm increases, a greater percentage participate in cooperative programs with the schools.

Table TI.3: Crosstabulation of Participation in Program by Size of Company

	Employees in Anchorage								TOTAL	
	1 to 10		11 to 25		26 to 100		over 100			
Participates	58	32.8%	30	41.7%	33	58.9%	22	71.0%	143	42.6%
Does not	119	67.2%	42	58.3%	23	41.1%	9	29.0%	193	57.4%
TOTAL	177	100%	72	100%	56	100%	31	100%	336	100%

Column percentages

Non-profit organizations participated in cooperative programs with the schools at more than twice the rate of profit-making firms.

Table TI.4: Crosstabulation of Participation in Program by Profit vs. Non-profit Company

	Company is:				TOTAL	
	Profit		Nonprofit			
Participates	116	38.3%	27	81.8%	143	42.6%
Does not	187	61.7%	6	18.2%	193	57.4%
TOTAL	303	100%	33	100%	336	100%

Column percentages

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Question I-1.

Which of the following would you recommend to another business?

1. **The School-Business Partnership Program (Adopt-a-School)**
2. **Serving on a school curriculum committee**
3. **Junior Achievement**
4. **The Vocational Internship Program, (VIP)**
5. **A Mentorship Program**
6. **On-site business tours for students**
7. **A program which recruits employees to lecture in the classroom**
8. **Wouldn't recommend any**

Most of the firms which had participated in the listed programs did recommend them to other firms. Only nine of the 143 firms with past participation records said they wouldn't recommend any of them, and thirteen said they were not sure.

Table I-1: Which Program Would You Recommend to Another Business

	Number of Yes Replies	Percent of Respondents
Would recommend:		
On-site business tours to students	40	28.0%
A program which recruits employees to lecture in classrroms	36	25.2%
Junior Achievement	35	24.5%
Vocational Internship Program (VIP)	29	20.3%
A mentorship program	26	18.2%
Serving on a school curriculum committee	15	10.5%
School Business Partnership Program (adopt-a-school)	13	9.1%
Other *	41	28.7%
Wouldn't recommend any	9	6.3%
Don't know	15	10.5%
No answer	6	4.2%
Total Respondents	143	100.0%

* Other answers:

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Question I-1 (Cont'd)

Table I-1 (Cont'd): Which Program Would You Recommend to Another Business--"other" answers

4	Career center interns
1	West high school OJT
1	Hiring students through high schools
1	High school credit for working
5	SAVE
4	JTPA
1	JTPA, nine star
1	STEP
1	Student interns
1	Internship program
1	Private internship -peer support groups
1	Private internship -university level
2	UAA internships
1	University practicum - "storefront school"
1	College level teaching & internships
1	Close-Up
1	IBEW apprenticeship program
1	Burger King Academy AVAIL program
1	Curriculum training
1	Career days & health days at schools
1	University engineering program
1	Advising college students on projects
1	The college group evaluation
1	Dept of Education program for the developmentally disabled
1	Working with retarded people, hiring them
1	ARCA
1	Create own types of programs
1	Get people involved
1	They don't communicate with other companies
1	Depends on the organization

Question I-2.

What factors led you to become involved?

1. **Need to have better entry-level workers**
2. **Desire to do something for the community**
3. **As an investment, to develop a program we could sell to other companies**
4. **As a tax benefit**
5. **To create interest in this field among students**
6. **To increase the productivity and job satisfaction of existing employees**

The two factors which led the majority of firms to become involved with some school program related more to general community concerns than to immediate bottom-line payoffs. Two-thirds (69%) said they had "a desire to do something for the community."

More than half of the companies involved wanted "to increase interest in the field among students." Slightly more than one-third related involvement in such programs to creating better entry-level workers.

Table I-2: What Factors Led You to Become Involved

	Number of Yes Replies	Percent of Responcents
Factors:		
Desire to do something for the community	98	68.5%
To increase interest in this field among students	77	53.8%
To increase productivity and job satisfaction	45	31.5%
Need to have better entry-level workers	50	35.0%
As a tax benefit	4	2.8%
As an investment, to develop a program we could sell	1	.7%
Other *	38	26.6%
No answer	6	4.2%
Total Respondents	143	

* Other answers:

8 Given invitation/ We were asked/ Friend badgered me

6 Part of our goal or mission as a company
1 It's required because we are a union company
1 The law

2 Personal satisfaction
1 To promote self-sufficiency in the villages
1 Because of parent needs, teacher needs
1 Benefit to employees in school
1 Benefit the students getting credit for working
1 To get people working
1 We are good guys

4 To promote the company or it's products
3 General manager had worked with it/ was interested/ requested it
2 Needed extra help
1 Hold costs down
1 Low cost help and to provide a good first time job experience
1 The student needs to fulfill a college requirement & we fill the bill
1 The program is successful
1 I don't know

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Question T-II.

Have you ever tried and dropped any of these programs?

1. Yes
2. No

Twenty-six firms said they had discontinued a program in which they had agreed to participate.

Table II: Have You Tried and Dropped Any of the Programs

	Count	Percent
Have tried and dropped programs.....	26	12.9%
Have tried none.....	172	85.6%
No answer.....	3	1.5%
TOTAL.....	201	100.0%

Question II-2.

Which, if any, of the programs would you recommend to another business?

1. **The School-Business Partnership Program (Adopt-a-School)**
2. **Serving on a school curriculum committee**
3. **Junior Achievement**
4. **The Vocational Internship Program, (VIP)**
5. **A Mentorship Program**
6. **On-site business tours for students**
7. **A program which recruits employees to lecture in the classroom**
8. **Wouldn't recommend any**

Half of the twenty-six firms which dropped one of the cooperative programs between schools and businesses still would have recommended one or more of such programs to another business. Four of those companies said they would not recommend such a program.

Table II-2: Which Programs Would You Recommend to Another Business

	Number of Yes Replies	Percent of Respondents
Would recommend:		
On-site business tours to students	4	15.4%
Vocational Internship Program (VIP)	3	11.5%
School Business Partnership Program (adopt-a-school)	2	7.7%
Serving on a school curriculum committee	1	3.8%
Junior Achievement	1	3.8%
A mentorship program	1	3.8%
A program which recruits employees to lecture in classrroms		
Other *	4	15.4%
Wouldn't recommend any	4	15.4%
Don't know	4	15.4%
No answer	7	26.9%
Total Respondents	26	100.0%

* Other answers:

1 Program where state pays half wages
1 OJT program
1 SAVE

1 JCT - but it's not in Alaska

Question II-3.

What factors led you to become involved?

1. **Need to have better entry-level workers**
2. **Desire to do something for the community**
3. **As an investment, to develop a program we could sell to other companies**
4. **As a tax benefit**
5. **To create interest in this field among students**
6. **To increase the productivity and job satisfaction of existing employees**

In general, companies rank reasons for participating in a cooperative program the same whether they are still involved or not.

*to increase interest in the field (35%)
*the need to have better entry level workers (31%)
*the desire to do something for the community (31%)

However, those actively involved in a program put a little more emphasis on the need to have better entry-level workers.

Table II-3: What Factors Led You to Become Involved

	Number of Yes Replies	Percent of Respondents
Factors:		
To increase interest in this field among students	9	34.6%
Need to have better entry-level workers	8	30.8%
Desire to do something for the community	8	30.8%
To increase productivity and job satisfaction	5	19.2%
As an investment, to develop a program we could sell	1	3.8%
As a tax benefit	1	3.8%
Other *	9	34.6%
No answer	4	15.4%
Total Respondents	26	

* Other answers:

3 I was asked/ It was suggested
1 I wanted to try it
1 I knew it was available and decided to hire the individual

1 To hold costs down
1 More mature individuals available

1 To see that the programs wouldn't be dropped

1 Don't know

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Question T-III.

Are you familiar with any business that is or has been involved with any of these programs?

Thirty sampled firms indicated that they were familiar with a business involved in a cooperative program with the schools.

Table T-III: Do You Know of a Business Which Uses the Programs

	Count	Percent
Familiar with another business	30	16.3%
Know of none	148	80.4%
No answer	6	3.3%
TOTAL	184	100.0%

Question T-IV.

Have you ever considered any of these programs?

Of those firms which have not participated in any of the cooperative programs, one in seven (13%) said they had considered doing so.

Table T-IV: Have You Considered Any of the Programs

	Count	Percent
Have considered programs	24	13.3%
Have considered none	148	82.2%
No answer	8	4.4%
TOTAL	180	100.0%

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Question III-1.

Which of the programs did you consider?

1. The School-Business Partnership Program (Adopt-a-School)
2. Serving on a school curriculum committee
3. Junior Achievement
4. The Vocational Internship Program, (VIP)
5. A Mentorship Program
6. On-site business tours for students
7. A program which recruits employees to lecture in the classroom
8. Wouldn't recommend any

There was variance in those specific programs which the twenty-four non-participants had considered, with no more than four of the firms stipulating any particular program.

Table III-1: Which Programs Did You Consider

	Number of Yes Replies	Percent of Respondents
Considered:		
Junior Achievement	4	16.7%
Vocational Internship Program (VIP)	4	16.7%
School Business Partnership Program (adopt-a-school)	3	12.5%
On-site business tours to students	2	8.3%
Serving on a school curriculum committee	1	4.2%
A mentorship program	1	4.2%
A program which recruits employees to lecture in classrroms	1	4.2%
Other *	6	25.0%
Wouldn't recommend any		
Don't know	2	8.3%
No answer	8	33.3%
Total Respondents	24	100.0%

* Other answers:

2 Internship program through one of the Universities
1 Career center part time help
1 Computer internship program
1 JTPA

1 Advisor at Career Center

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Question III-2.

What factors led you to become involved?

1. **Need to have better entry-level workers**
2. **Desire to do something for the community**
3. **As an investment, to develop a program we could sell to other companies**
4. **As a tax benefit**
5. **To create interest in this field among students**
6. **To increase the productivity and job satisfaction of existing employees**

The factors which were most important to firms considering future involvement in the cooperative programs were ranked in an order similar to that used by firms actually participating. Again, the most frequent reasons were "a desire to do something for the community" and "to increase interest in this field among students."

Table III-2: Which Factors Led You to Consider Becoming Involved

	Number of Yes Replies	Percent of Respondents
Factors:		
Desire to do something for the community	11	45.8%
To increase interest in this field among students	11	45.8%
Need to have better entry-level workers	9	37.5%
To increase productivity and job satisfaction	6	25.0%
As an investment, to develop a program we could sell	1	4.2%
As a tax benefit	1	4.2%
Other *	4	16.7%
No answer	8	33.3%
Total Respondents	24	

* Other answers:

1 It would be better than advertising for screening potential employees

1 Part time help that would be reliable

1 I love kids and want to help them

Question T-V.

Would you consider any of them in the future?

Of those firms which have not participated in any cooperative program in the past, 42% said they might consider participating in such a program in the future. Almost as many firms said they would not consider such a program (41%).

Table V: Would You Consider Any of the Programs?

	Count	Percent
Would consider programs	81	41.5%
Would not	79	40.5%
No answer	35	17.9%
TOTAL	195	100.0%

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Question T-Va.

Which one or ones?

1. The School-Business Partnership Program (Adopt-a-School)
2. Serving on a school curriculum committee
3. Junior Achievement
4. Vocational Internship Program, (VIP)
5. A Mentorship Program
6. On-site business tours for students
7. A program which recruits employees to lecture in the classroom
8. None

Leading the list of programs firms would consider was the Vocational Internship Program (VIP). About one-quarter of firms responding to this question identified VIP as a possibility.

Table VA: Which Programs Would You Consider?

	Number of Yes Replies	Percent of Respondents
Would consider participating in:		
Vocational Internship Program (VIP)	19	23.5%
On-site business tours to students	15	18.5%
A program which recruits employees to lecture in classrroms	14	17.3%
A mentorship program	13	16.0%
Junior Achievement	11	13.6%
School Business Partnership Program (adopt-a-school)	6	7.4%
Serving on a school curriculum committee	4	4.9%
Other *	20	24.7%
None	6	7.4%
Don't know	18	22.2%
No answer	3	3.7%
Total Respondents	81	

* Other answers:

1 Something related to our business (banking & mortgage)
1 Continuing education designed for the optical field
1 Something related to fisheries or agriculture
1 Something for engineering or secreterial

1 Speaking, communication for employees
1 Communication & people skills

1 Tie in at university levels
1 JTPA with university level involvement
1 Student internship program at university level
1 Nine star JTPA

1 State program where state pays 50% of wages for interns
1 Management training program
1 DECA

5 Might be interested; need more info on the programs.
1 We are interested in many types of programs.

1 Anything that saves us money or doesn't cost much

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Qualitative Research: Verbatim Responses to Question 6

What type of employee training requires "formal classes conducted by your company?"

	Count	Percent of Respondents
FORMAL CLASSES:		
BUSINESS OR COMPANY SPECIFIC	53	37.6% **
Specific training in the service or product	45	31.9%
Policies & Procedures	7	5.0%
Orientation	3	2.1%
Philosophy	1	.7%
MANAGEMENT	39	27.7% **
Management skills	15	10.6%
Business management	3	2.1%
Motivation/ Leadership/ Enthusiasm	8	5.7%
Supervision/ Communication/ Organization	7	5.0%
Stress management	3	2.1%
Time management	2	1.4%
Behavior modification	2	1.4%
Human resource management/ Personnel mangement	2	1.4%
Performance evaluation	1	.7%
Personal problems (Alcohol)	1	.7%
Sex harassment	1	.7%
Troubleshooting	1	.7%
Project management & scheduling	1	.7%
Credit	1	.7%
Inventory & Warehouse managment	1	.7%
MARKETING	57	40.4% **
Sales technique/ Sales management	33	23.4%
Client or customer relations	3	2.1%
Customer service	8	5.7%
Product knowledge	15	10.6%
New products or services	14	9.9%
PROFESSIONAL	23	16.3% **
Human services/ Case management/ Counseling	10	7.1%
Licensing requirements (keeping current)	3	2.1%
Engineering	3	2.1%
Legal (includes paralegal)	3	2.1%
Finance, accounting, bookkeeping, payroll	2	1.4%
Writing/ Editing, proofreading	2	1.4%
Insurance	1	.7%
Sciences	1	.7%

* Percentages add to more than 100% because many respondents gave more than

** Many respondents gave several responses that could be classified into one of the broad categories. This duplication was eliminated in totalling the broad categories, yielding a net total of respondents who gave one or more answers in each category.

(continued)

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What type of employee training requires "formal classes conducted by your company?" (Cont'd)

	Count	Percent of Respondents
EQUIPMENT & TECHNOLOGY	32	22.7% **
Technical skills	17	12.1%
Computers	13	9.2%
Software	2	1.4%
Equipment management & repair	3	2.1%
OFFICE OPERATIONS	2	1.4% **
Secretarial skills	2	1.4%
BASIC SKILLS DEVELOPMENT	1	.7% **
English classes	1	.7%
SAFETY	24	17.0% **
Hazardous waste	9	6.4%
General safety training for specific areas	8	5.7%
First aid/ CPR	6	4.3%
Product safety	3	2.1%
Fire school	2	1.4%
Emergency	1	.7%
NO ANSWER	6	4.3% **
Total Respondents *	141	

* Percentages add to more than 100% because many respondents gave more than

** Many respondents gave several responses that could be classified into one of the broad categories. This duplication was eliminated in totalling the broad categories, yielding a net total of respondents who gave one or more answers in each category.

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What type of employee training requires "seminars offered by an outside company?"

	Count	Percent of Respondents
SEMINARS:		
BUSINESS OR COMPANY SPECIFIC	60	27.3% **
Specific training in the service or product	58	26.4%
Advertising/ Public relations	2	.9%
MANAGEMENT	61	27.7% **
Management skills	35	15.9%
Motivation/ Leadership/ Enthusiasm	10	4.5%
Supervision/ Communication/ Organization	9	4.1%
Business management	4	1.8%
Time management	4	1.8%
Human resource management/ Personnel management	3	1.4%
Behavior modification	2	.9%
Personnel/ Employee management	2	.9%
Stress management	2	.9%
Project management & scheduling	1	.5%
Collections	1	.5%
MARKETING	49	22.3% **
Sales technique/ Sales management	18	8.2%
Customer service	14	6.4%
Service seminars (non-specific)	3	1.4%
Client or customer relations	2	.9%
Telemarketing	1	.5%
New products or services	10	4.5%
Product knowledge	9	4.1%
NAMED TRAINING ORGANIZATION OR INSTITUTION	26	11.8% **
College or university	9	4.1%
Career Track	7	3.2%
Dale Carnegie	3	1.4%
In Search of Excellence	1	.5%
Lynn Curry-Swann	1	.5%
Dunn & Bradstreet	1	.5%
Fred Pyror	1	.5%
Culture Seminars Conference	1	.5%
Paget Thompson Mangement	1	.5%
Small Business Administration	3	1.4%
Anchorage Visitor & Convention Bureau	2	.9%
Beverage Control Board	2	.9%

* Percentages add to more than 100% because many respondents gave more than

** Many respondents gave several responses that could be classified into one of the broad categories. This duplication was eliminated in totalling the broad categories, yielding a net total of respondents who gave one or more answers in each category.

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What type of employee training requires "seminars offered by an outside company?" (Cont'd)

	Count	Percent of Respondents
PROFESSIONAL	48	21.8% **
Finance, accounting, bookkeeping, payroll	11	5.0%
Human services/ Case management/ Counseling	9	4.1%
Legal (includes paralegal)	8	3.6%
Licensing requirements (keeping current)	6	2.7%
Insurance	5	2.3%
Writing/ Editing, proofreading	4	1.8%
Engineering	4	1.8%
Grant writing/ Fundraising	3	1.4%
Sciences	2	.9%
Crisis intervention	1	.5%
EQUIPMENT & TECHNOLOGY	58	26.4% **
Computers	25	11.4%
Software	4	1.8%
Equipment management & repair	1	.5%
Technical skills	33	15.0%
Energy efficiency or conservation	1	.5%
OFFICE OPERATIONS	20	9.1% **
Secretarial skills	16	7.3%
Word processing	3	1.4%
Front office skills	2	.9%
Desk top publishing	1	.5%
BASIC SKILLS DEVELOPMENT	2	.9% **
English classes	1	.5%
Math	1	.5%
SAFETY	14	6.4% **
General safety training for specific areas	7	3.2%
Hazardous waste	3	1.4%
First aid/ CPR	2	.9%
Fire school	2	.9%
Product safety	1	.5%
Industrial	1	.5%
NO ANSWER	7	3.2% **
Total Respondents	220	

* Percentages add to more than 100% because many respondents gave more than

** Many respondents gave several responses that could be classified into one of the broad categories. This duplication was eliminated in totalling the broad categories, yielding a net total of respondents who gave one or more answers in each category.

What type of employee training requires "a contracted firm or outside vendor to train employees?"

	Count	Percent of Respondents
ON-SITE:		
BUSINESS OR COMPANY SPECIFIC	17	19.3% **
Specific training in the service or product	16	18.2%
Policies & Procedures	1	1.1%
MANAGEMENT	22	25.0% **
Management skills	10	11.4%
Supervision/ Communication/ Organization	4	4.5%
Motivation/ Leadership/ Enthusiasm	4	4.5%
Stress management	2	2.3%
Business management	1	1.1%
Time management	1	1.1%
Conflict resolution	1	1.1%
Management tests: Meyers Briggs	1	1.1%
Personal problems (drug testing)	1	1.1%
MARKETING	27	30.7% **
Sales technique/ Sales management	7	8.0%
Customer service/ Client relations	3	3.4%
Product knowledge	14	15.9%
New products or services	14	15.9%
NAMED TRAINING ORGANIZATION OR INSTITUTION	5	5.7% **
Employee Assistance Program	2	2.3%
Association Of Christian Schools Intl	1	1.1%
Beverage Control Board	1	1.1%
Better Business Bureau	1	1.1%
PROFESSIONAL	12	13.6% **
Human services/ Case management/ Counseling	8	9.1%
Finance, accounting, bookkeeping, payroll	1	1.1%
Writing/ Editing, proofreading	1	1.1%
Insurance	1	1.1%
Social Security workshop	1	1.1%
EQUIPMENT & TECHNOLOGY	26	29.5% **
Computers	13	14.8%
Technical skills	8	9.1%
Equipment management & repair	3	3.4%
Software	2	2.3%
New systems	2	2.3%

* Percentages add to more than 100% because many respondents gave more than

** Many respondents gave several responses that could be classified into one of the broad categories. This duplication was eliminated in totalling the broad categories, yielding a net total of respondents who gave one or more answers in each category.

(continued)

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What type of employee training requires "a contracted firm or outside vendor to train employees?" (Cont'd)

	Count	Percent of Respondents
OFFICE OPERATIONS	2	2.3% **
Typewriters, typing	1	1.1%
Front office skills	1	1.1%
SAFETY	7	8.0% **
General safety training for specific areas	3	3.4%
First aid/ CPR	2	2.3%
Security	1	1.1%
Product safety	1	1.1%
Fire alarm	1	1.1%
NO ANSWER	4	4.5% **
Total Respondents	88	

* Percentages add to more than 100% because many respondents gave more than

** Many respondents gave several responses that could be classified into one of the broad categories. This duplication was eliminated in totalling the broad categories, yielding a net total of respondents who gave one or more answers in each category.

Appendix A

The ACCESS Research Team

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Veronica Slajer, Grassroots Organizer
Sharon Macklin, Government Relations
David Haynes, Writer and Editor
Gina Altaire Alzate, Asian American Interviewer, Selected In-Depth Personal Interviews
Mary Reeve, Alaska Native Interviewer, Selected In-Depth Personal Interviews
David Olivera, Hispanic Interviewer, Selected In-Depth Personal Interviews

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Appendix B

Mail-out Anchorage Residential Survey

The research objectives of the ACCESS mail-out survey were:

- to explore the educational and training needs of Anchorage residents, from preschool through post-secondary education;
- to determine residents' attitudes toward ideas about education which are being discussed in the media;
- to identify the roles the school, the home and the community should play in educating their children;
- to examine the state's priorities for funding education, as Anchorage residents perceive them;
- to identify the deterrents that inhibit success in educational objectives;
- to identify the skills, knowledge and educational levels of Anchorage families; and
- to obtain demographic information on Anchorage residents.

Survey Sample and Research Methodology

Craciun & Associates selected a mail-out survey as the most appropriate quantitative research method. The amount of content and the large sample size (n=1600) necessitated a mail-out survey to meet the research objectives. The survey instrument was an extensive twenty-four page questionnaire designed to gather information on the educational and training levels and needs of Anchorage residents (see Appendix B for survey instrument).

The Anchorage Chamber of Commerce reviewed the survey instrument during its development. Other key people involved in survey development were Dr. Jeanne Campbell and Dr. Michael Patton, national Education Consultants; Sally Mead, formerly with the State Department of Health and Social Services; Dr. Thomas O'Rourke, Anchorage School District Superintendent; Fred Stofflet, Director, Anchorage School District Department of Assessment and Evaluation; Mia Oxley, Executive Director, Child Care Connection; Jean Buchanan, Alaska's Youth: Ready for Work, Incorporated; Libby Roderick, Human Resource Consultant; and Judy Brady, Steve Shropshire and David Cuddy of the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce Excellence in Education Committee. A community-wide meeting was held February 15, 1991, to receive input from Anchorage residents.

The sample of sixteen hundred (n=1600) Municipality of Anchorage residents was selected from a computer-generated random list of residents registered to vote in the 1990 election. A pretest of the survey was conducted (n=25) prior to data collection.

The first mail-out was sent to sixteen-hundred residents on March 14, 1991, with the goal of obtaining one thousand completed surveys (n=1000). One week later, on March 21, 1991, a follow-up post card was sent to the original sample of sixteen-hundred to encourage respondents to complete the survey they had previously received. At this time, they were given the opportunity to call for a replacement survey if they had lost or misplaced the original (see Appendix C for follow-up post card). By April 5, 1991, even hundred and eighty-one (n=781) completed surveys had been received, yielding a 51% response rate.

On April 5, 1991, a second mail-out containing a replacement survey was sent to those who had not yet turned in a survey. This second mail-out was conducted to minimize the bias associated with relying on a sample of respondents who are easily contacted or most likely to respond. By April 18, the cutoff date, nine hundred and forty-eight (n=948) completed surveys had been received for analysis. This completed sample size ensures odds of nineteen out of twenty that if all Anchorage households were surveyed, the findings would differ from the following survey results by no more than 3.1 percentage points in either direction.

A total of seventy-three incorrectly addressed surveys were returned by the post office. These "return to sender" surveys have been subtracted from the sample size to calculate the response rate. Therefore, the sample size of n=1527 yields a response rate of 62%. Because an additional forty-four surveys were received after the deadline, they were not analyzed as part of the study. However, had they been included, the total return would have been n=992, with a response rate of 65%.

To ensure complete anonymity of respondents, each survey had a unique identification number for tracking purposes. An extensive sample accounting system was developed and implemented to ensure respondent confidentiality and to maintain a high standard of quality control over the sample returns.

A. Mail-Out Survey Limitations

Locating lists for mail-out surveys which reach a truly representative segment of the population is difficult. The most cost- and time-effective method was a list of those registered to vote in the 1990 Municipal elections, the broadest-based residential list available. This list, however, tends to yield a comparatively stable group of people, those who have lived longer in Alaska and are relatively well-informed.

Self-selectivity means that those with limited time, understanding of or appreciation for surveys--the illiterate, the poor, differently acculturated, single working parents--choose not to respond. These sample shortcomings were anticipated by the research team. Another phase of the project will try to reach any under-represented groups through "personal interviews of families."

Mail-out surveys tend to be completed by the female in a mixed household unless directions specify otherwise. This survey canvassed households, not individuals. The sex of the respondent not being a variable, more respondents were female.

Since households received the survey during spring break, answers to such items as "the number of meals eaten together as a family" and "hours spent watching television" may be skewed.

Certain questions elicit what are thought to be socially desirable responses. Questions from our study on the following topics fall into this category:

- *television viewing,
- *reporting academic grades,
- *frequency of parent/teacher contact, and
- *parents' plans to work for credentials.

B. **Comparison of Anchorage Residential Study Demographics to Municipality of Anchorage Demographics: An Analysis**

A comparison of the demographics of the ACCESS sample to the *1989 Anchorage Population and Housing Profile* conducted by the Municipality of Anchorage (M.O.A.), identifies those groups of people under-represented in the ACCESS study.

	ACCESS	1989 M.O.A. Profile
Gender		
Male	38%	50.9%
Female	62%	49.1%
Age		
Median age	43	36
Ethnicity		
Caucasian[36]	91.9%	80.6%
Afro-American[37]	3.2%	5.8%
Alaska Native	2.0%	6.2%
Asian	1.4%	5.0%
other, including American Indian	2.6%	2.4%

*For comparison to the M.O.A. Profile, Spanish Origin/Hispanic were included within the Caucasian and Afro-American categories.

Income		
Median income	$58,060.00	$37,863.00
Household Size:		
Total in Household	3.01	2.68

	ACCESS	Alaska Economic Trends, Alaska Department of Labor May 1991
Employment Status		
Unemployment rate	2.3%	6.2%

[36] For comparison to the M.O.A. Profile, Spanish Origin/Hispanic were included within the Caucasian and Afro-American categories.

[37] Ibid.

Qualitative Research with "Hard-to-Reach" Anchorage Residents

While the mail-out survey to Anchorage residents was randomly distributed, it is a self-selecting research design (information is gathered only from those who choose to mail it back). As such, this traditional quantitative method is limited in its ability to reach an entire population. Roughly 20% of the Anchorage population, such as individuals without homes or telephones, illiterate residents, non-English-speaking residents, single working parents, and people working two jobs, were not adequately represented. The Qualitative Research Phase targeted these "hard-to-reach" residents, most of whom are low-income.

The research objectives of the ACCESS Qualitative Phase were to:

- explore the educational and training aspirations of low-income Anchorage residents, from preschool through post-secondary education;
- determine low-income residents' attitudes toward ideas about education which are currently being discussed by the community;
- discover the educational concerns and training needs of Anchorage's ethnic and racial minorities;
- compare roles the school, the home and the community should play in educating their children;
- examine governmental priorities for funding education, as low-income Anchorage residents perceive them;
- define the barriers to success in educational and career goals; and
- identify the skills, knowledge and educational levels of low-income Anchorage families.

Survey Sample and Research Methodology

Why Qualitative Research?

In pursuing a strategy that would adequately capture the input of "hard-to-reach" Anchorage residents, Craciun & Associates selected a qualitative research design specifically intended to reach low-income residents. "Low-income" was defined as a total household income of less than $30,000. The following methodology was developed to target "hard-to-reach" residents:

- Focus Group research;
- In-depth personal interviews;
- Random residential door-to-door interviews; and
- On-site interviews at support services and businesses which cater to low-income residents.

Our earlier quantitative efforts (mail and telephone surveys) revealed poor response rates from identifiable racial and ethnic minorities living in Anchorage. Consequently, we began this next research phase with a less structured format and a more personal contact approach. We hoped that both of these techniques would be more welcoming and culturally supportive.

We next reached out for assistance from relevant church groups, social organizations, and individuals who were advocates for these targeted populations. All of these efforts assisted us in getting accurate information from groups of people not often represented in more traditional designs.

The following discussion of methodology explains procedures used to gather data from July 24 through September 29, 1991.

Why Four Qualitative Methods?

Focus groups allowed for small groups, ideally six to eight people, all sharing a common experience, either racial, ethnic or lifestyle. The dynamics of a focus group session create a totally permissible and flexible environment in which to probe whatever subject or issue comes up for the group. Also, participants are more comfortable interacting because they are with others who are similar to them. Participants discussed their views on education with a moderator, and sometimes an indigenous assistant moderator. Also, to enhance comfort levels, many of the focus groups were conducted at local sites familiar to the group members.

Selected in-depth personal interviews provided an opportunity for face-to-face, open-ended discussions between the interviewee and an indigenous interviewer. All interviewers were of the same ethnicity and race as the interviewees. This offered interviewees an opportunity to respond comfortably and honestly with a person who understood subjective nuances.

Door-to-door interviews were conducted in the neighborhoods where low-income people resided. The interviewer was not always from the same ethnicity as the interviewees, however, the "in-home" context of the interviewing session allowed the interviewee to be on his or her own "turf." This technique also offered the possibility of including other family members in responses to open-ended questions.

Although brief in comparison to the other methods used, **on-site interviews** allowed for some input by individuals as they went about their daily activities of getting groceries, catching the bus, eating lunch, and visiting support service centers. Along with the door-to-door interviews, research for on-site interviewing was conducted in a more natural setting, allowing for spontaneity in responses as the interviewees conveyed their feelings and insights about education.

Focus Group Research

Fourteen focus groups were conducted with

- African Americans
- Alaska Natives
- Asian Americans
- Hispanics
- People Experiencing Disabilities
- Gay and Lesbian Parents
- Parents in Support Groups
- Women in Treatment Groups

When available, focus groups were conducted in locations familiar to the participants, such as local churches or neighborhood organizations. The average length of each session was two hours. A short close-ended demographic survey was completed by each participant prior to the open-ended, qualitative questions asked during each focus group. For focus groups of ethnic minorities, when possible, one of the assistant moderators was of the same ethnicity.

Selected In-Depth Personal Interviews

Targeted personal interviews were conducted with Alaska Natives, Asian Americans and Hispanics. Interviewee names were obtained from lists provided by various ethnic organizations and from networking within ethnic communities. Therefore, group participants may have been more involved than average citizens in local community affairs.

In most cases, interviews were conducted in the primary language of the interviewee. All of the interviews were conducted in the interviewee's home and lasted from one-half hour to ninety minutes. In all three cases the ethnicity of the interviewer matched that of the interviewee because research has shown that higher degrees of comfort and honesty in responses are obtained when those of similar race and ethnicity query each other.

The Discussion Guide contained the same open-ended questioning route used in the focus group research. By observation, the interviewer recorded sex, approximate age and ethnicity of the person being interviewed. When possible, respondents were asked about demographic information including annual household income, level of formal education attained, and racial composition of the person's neighborhood.

(Note: Obtaining demographic information through personal interviews is difficult because of the sensitive nature of the information. Interviewers were instructed to primarily collect data on respondent's views toward education and -- when possible -- collect demographic information.)

The interviewing technique was flexible and open-ended, even if it meant disregarding the study guide altogether. This allowed those interviewed every opportunity to discuss the subject of education even to the point of self-selected topics. In every case the interviewees wanted to and did answer every question posed, and answers and comments were offered with careful consideration and deep feeling. Respondents often voiced their gratitude at being asked to give their opinions on the issue of education. Verbatim responses taken from the interviews are often added to illustrate findings discussed in the text.

Random Residential Door-to-Door Interviews

Anchorage's thirty-four Census Tracts were examined to determined which of them met the following two criteria: (1) a minority population exceeding 30% and (2) a median household income of less than $20,000. From this criteria, four census tracts were targeted for study: Downtown, Fairview, Mountain View and Spenard.

Streets were randomly selected in the four census tracts and household interviews, lasting from ten to forty-five minutes, were conducted systematically (every third household) with a goal of completing a minimum of fifteen interviews and a maximum of fifty in each neighborhood (tract).

All interviewers were white, whereas many interviewees were of different minority groups. This fact undoubtedly altered the dynamics of face-to-face interviewing, leading to somewhat different responses than for the selected in-depth personal interviews, where ethnicity was the same for both interviewer and interviewee. This phenomenon was particularly true for Alaska Native interviewees. Moreover, the people interviewed were randomly selected and not as likely to be minority group activists, involved in their community. Open-ended questions were primarily used in interviewing respondents and interviewers checked the person's demographics through observation to assure the representation of our desired sample population.

On-Site Interviews

On-site interviews were conducted at the following support service centers and businesses identified as serving low-income clients:

Bean's Cafe
Bishop's Attic
Carrs Grocery on Gambell
Labor Union Hall
Salvation Army Meal Site in Downtown
Salvation Army Meal Site in Mountain View
Salvation Army Meal Site in Spenard
Transit Center

While the primary target was low-income residents, secondary targets were elderly residents, homeless residents, racial/ethnic groups and labor union members.

The Discussion Guide focused on gathering the same information obtained through other ACCESS research methods. Discussion questions were revised, however, to yield more specific, brief answers since interviews were being conducted at local businesses and centers. The instrument took from five to fifteen minutes to administer.

Telephone Survey to Anchorage Businesses

The research objectives of the ACCESS business telephone survey were:

- to ascertain what the business community sees as the weaknesses in its job applicants;
- to identify training and education provided by companies for new-hires and existing employees;
- to develop an understanding of the current and future educational and training needs of businesses; and
- to identify, for further study, those businesses currently involved in any cooperative program with the school system.

Survey Sample and Research Methodology

Craciun & Associates selected a telephone survey as the most appropriate quantitative research method. The survey instrument was a structured questionnaire specifically designed to meet the study objectives.

The Anchorage Chamber of Commerce Excellence in Education Committee reviewed the survey instrument during its development. Other key people involved in survey development were Dr. Jeanne Campbell and Dr. Michael Patton, national education consultants; Dr. Lynne Curry-Swann, training consultant; and Jean Buchanan, Alaska's Youth: Ready for Work, Incorporated.

A pre-test of the survey instrument was conducted prior to data collection (n=50). Data collection occurred from April 15 to April 26, 1991.

The sample was randomly selected from the 1991 ATU Yellow Pages' listing of businesses. Each industry in Alaska--excluding government--was sampled in proportion to its employment in Anchorage as defined by the Municipality of Anchorage *1989 Anchorage Indicators*.

Sample Represented	Business Sector
33.3%	Services including hotel/motel, health, social, business, Alaska Pacific University and Anchorage Christian Schools
32.0%	Trade including clothing, food, auto, appliances, furniture, audio/video, sporting goods, theatres, books/cards and computers
13.3%	Transportation, communication and utilities
8.0%	Finance, insurance and real estate
6.7%	Construction
4.0%	Mining and gas/oil industries
2.7%	Manufacturing

From a centralized phonebank, respondents were personally contacted by professional interviewers employed by Craciun & Associates. Interviewers are trained in skills needed to keep non-response to a minimum, to answer frequently-asked questions, and to use vocabulary relevant to the study. Up to seven "call-back" attempts were made to minimize any bias associated with relying on a sample of respondents who are easily contacted. The client's identity and all information gathered was considered strictly confidential.

The completed sample size of three hundred and seventy-five (n=375) ensures odds of nineteen out of twenty that if all Anchorage businesses were surveyed, the findings would differ from the following survey results by no more than 5.2 percentage points in either direction.

A. Business Sample Limitations

While government offices were originally included as 25% of the sample, pretesting revealed the futility of collecting data from this sample population. To adequately and scientifically to represent local, state and federal employees would necessitate surveying every division of each government as well as their central job placement offices. This was not possible within the scope of this project.

B. Response Rate by Industry

1.	Services		
		Business	88%
		Social	84%
		Hotel/motel	80%
		Other	80%
		Health	58%
2.	Trade		
		Food	85%
		Furniture, Audio/Video, Theater	84%
		Clothing	79%
		Auto, Appliances	76%
		Books/Cards, Sporting, Computer	72%
3a.	Transportation		89%
3b.	Communication, Utilities		96%
4.	Finance, Insurance, Real Estate		76%
5.	Construction		92%
6.	Mining, Gas, Oil		52%
7.	Manufacturing		83%

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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CRACIUN & ASSOCIATES

WISE

Winning With Stronger Education

ACCESS Research
Executive Summaries

- Mail-Out Anchorage Residential Survey
- Qualitative Research with "Hard-to-Reach" Residents
- Anchorage Teachers' Focus Group Research
- Telephone Survey of Anchorage Businesses

by
Craciun & Associates
October 21, 1991

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WISE Project Background

The bright future of Alaska depends on preparing our multicultural society with the education necessary for success.

The Winning With Stronger Education (WISE) Project comes at a time when both the place of Anchorage in the world and the work force is changing its face and form. From fish to tourism to oil, Anchorage businesses must deal increasingly with international competition. At the same time, Anchorage employers must look increasingly at a more diverse work force. In Anchorage, as in the rest of America, women, minorities and single parents are the work force of the future.[1]

> "During the 1980s, the U.S. received 6 million legal immigrants, up from 4.2 million during the 1970s and 3.2 million during the 1960s. Few immigrants now are of European origin. Immigrants also tend to have more children than the non-Hispanic white population, as do Hispanics and blacks. Together, these two factors are boosting the share of minorities in the population."[2]

> "Not long ago, the term 'work force' conjured up images of white men in ties or blue collars. Today employers must increasingly look to women and minorities. Between now and the year 2000, blacks and Hispanics will account for 50% of all labor-force growth (in America)."[3]

> "Between 1989 and 2000, twenty-five million people will join the work force. Approximately 85% of those new workers will be minorities: American-born women as well as black, Hispanic, Asian, American Indian and Pacific Islander men. The remaining 15% will be white males."[4]

Multicultural attitudes and skills, and hi-tech capabilities are the key educational needs of that future work force.

The public school system, from preschool to post-secondary, must now look to new ways of teaching this generation of multicultural students. In September of 1991, a first-ever forecast of the ethnic makeup of public schools predicted that one-third of U.S. students will be minorities by 1995. The report, "The Road to College: Educational Progress by Race and Ethnicity," noted that non-white and Hispanic student populations already make up a majority in three states, and by 1994 two more will join the group.

When considering the high incidence of short-term and temporary residence and the boom/bust economic cycling in Anchorage, it is easy to understand that there is a great and growing diversity of educational needs. "In 1987-88, a total of 2,283 students were enrolled in the [Anchorage School District Bilingual] program that accommodated sixty-seven languages."[5] Alaska Natives come from many diverse cultures, speaking many different languages but, when lumped together, are the single largest minority population in Anchorage,[6] with the lowest family income[7] and lowest employment rates.[8]

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[1] Martha Farnsworth Riche, "We're All Minorities Now," American Demographics, (October 1991).

[2] Ibid.

[3] Sylvia Ann Hewlett, "The Boundaries of Business: The Human Resource Deficit," Harvard Business Review, (July-August, 1991).

[4] Alaska Pacific Consultants, Anchorage, Alaska, (907) 258-7002.

[5] Anchorage School District, Citizens For Quality Education, Draft Report on Equal Education Opportunity ; Equal Employment Opportunity (May 7, 1991), p. II-A-9.

[6] Municipality of Anchorage, 1989 Anchorage Population and Housing Profile (February 1989), Insert.

[7] Susan Fison, Municipality of Anchorage, personal communication, October 1, 1991.

[8] Municipality of Anchorage, 1988 Anchorage Population and Housing Profile (December 1988), Table 6-4.

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Among Anchorage School District students, 26% are ethnic minorities, including Alaska Natives, African Americans, Asians and Hispanics.[9] Alaska Natives, 9.3% of the Anchorage School District student body,[10] earn more failing grades in basic courses[11] and drop out of school[12] more than students of any other cultural background.

The Asian and Pacific Islander population is the fastest growing ethnic population in Anchorage, increasing from 3.1% of the total population in 1984, to 5.0% in 1989.[13] Fifty-two percent of the students enrolled in the Anchorage School District's Bilingual Program (1990 - 1991) were of Asian/Pacific Islander ethnicity.[14] This group's involvement in bilingual education is extremely significant because they accounted for only 5.7% of the district's total enrollment.[15]

However, Asian/Pacific Islander teachers were underrepresented (given student percentages) in both the Bilingual Programs (42%)[16] and for the district as a whole (2.5%).[17] Despite this underrepresentation, Asian/Pacific Islander students had the lowest dropout rate (2.03%) of any ethnic group -- including whites -- for the 1989 - 1990 school year;[18] and they were failing courses at the lowest rate (7%) in the 1990 -1991 school year.[19]

Although the Hispanic population in Alaska is only 3.2% (compared to 9% nationally), it has increased 87% over the last ten years, a percentage that is representative of the dramatic increase in the number of minority persons in Alaska (47%) during the same ten-year period.[20] Hispanic students represent 3.2% of the total Anchorage student population,[21] while only 2% of Anchorage School District teachers are Hispanic.[22] Although the actual Hispanic population of students and teachers is the smallest in the district, the ratio of Hispanic teachers to students is the third highest of all the populations reported, preceded by white and African American populations respectively.[23] However, the percentage of Hispanic student dropouts has been second only to the Alaska Native drop out rate for three out of the last four years.[24]

One in twelve (8.1%)[25] students enrolled in the Anchorage School District is African American. The 1990 Census reports that African Americans now constitute 6.4% of Anchorage's population,[26] rivaling Alaska Natives as the largest minority group in the Municipality of Anchorage.

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9 Anchorage School District, Citizens For Quality Education, op. cit., p. II-A-15.

10 Ibid, p. II-A-15.

11 Peter Blumberg, "Natives, Blacks Recording Most Failing Grades," Anchorage Daily News, (August 3, 1991), p. B1.

12 Anchorage School District, Citizens For Quality Education, op. cit., Table 40.

13 Municipality of Anchorage, op. cit., 1989.

14 Anchorage School District, Citizens For Quality Education, op. cit., p. II-A-9.

15 Ibid, p. II-A-15.

16 Ibid, p. II-A-9.

17 Ibid, p. II-A-15.

18 Ibid, Table 40.

19 Blumberg, p. B1.

20 Alaska Department of Labor, Alaska Population Overview, 1990 Census & Estimates (July 1991), p. 27.

21 Anchorage School District, Citizens For Quality Education, op. cit., p. II-A-15.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid, Table 40.

25 Ibid, p. II-B-9.

26 Ibid, p. II-A-15.

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Important to note, the four largest minorities in the Anchorage School District's student population are also underrepresented at the University of Alaska, Anchorage. Opening enrollment figures for the fall semester, 1991 showed 4.9% African Americans, 4.5% Alaska Natives, 3.6% Asians and Pacific Islanders, and 2.7% Hispanics.[27] Since educational attainment is a yardstick for predicting socioeconomic mobility, these statistics are alarming.

The Anchorage community must now look to new and innovative ways of educating and training our multicultural population -- today's and, increasingly, tomorrow's work force. While there are strong pressures to assimilate diverse populations, there are equally strong diverging opinions about how best to do so. Building bridges between cultures requires the ability to change, to integrate discoveries. We are confronted with reality -- the whole is only as good as the sum of its parts. The Anchorage community -- educators, business leaders and private citizens -- must grapple with change now.

ACCESS Research Objective

To provide the Anchorage community with an in-depth understanding of the educational and job training needs of the entire Anchorage community -- from residents of all income levels and educational backgrounds, as well as ethnic and racial identity -- Craciun and Associates has conducted primary research for the WISE Project since January 1991. The objective of this multiphase research project was to provide a series of research tools designed to gain a deeper understanding of Anchorage residents' views on education.

Phases of the ACCESS Research Project included:

- a comprehensive mail-out survey sent to a random sample of 1600 Municipality of Anchorage residents;
- personal interviews by Jean Craciun with 25 key Alaska business leaders;
- a telephone survey of 375 randomly selected Anchorage businesses;
- focus group sessions with Anchorage School District teachers; and
- qualitative research (focus group research, targeted personal interviews, random residential door-to-door interviews, and on-site interviews at businesses and organizations which cater to lower-income residents) with "hard-to-reach" residents.

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[27] University of Alaska, Anchorage, "Fall 1991 Opening Report," issued October 11, 1991.

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Mail-Out Anchorage Residential Survey

The ACCESS mail-out survey to residents is the first in a series of research tools designed to give the Anchorage community a deeper understanding of education. This mail-out was not designed to exclude any population segment. However, from field experience with mail-out surveys, we knew that roughly 20% of the residents would fall into a "hard-to-reach" category. Therefore, we conducted Qualitative Research, a more informal technique to ensure that all Anchorage residents are represented in our final results to the community.

In March and April of 1991, 1600 Anchorage residents were sent the ACCESS mail-out survey. Nine hundred forty-eight surveys (N=948) were completed and returned, a 62% response rate.

This wealth of data yielded some interesting findings about residents' opinions on education and their role in it. It must be noted that mail-out surveys tend to be "self-selecting;" that is, respondents are usually more literate and of higher socioeconomic status than average.

In general, residents felt positive about education in Anchorage, with some caveats:

*Sixty-three percent believed there was too little discipline in the schools.

*By a margin of two to one, residents thought that teachers were not overpaid.

*And 98% felt that self-esteem was essential to a child's educational success.

How will Anchorage pay for better education? A resounding two-thirds of the residents said they would be willing to spend more on public schools if they knew where the money was going. As common sense would tell us, the more education people have, the more they would be willing to increase funding.

The source of this revenue should come from reduced government spending and/or increased taxes, according to Anchorage residents. Even though there was no consensus on what kind of tax should be imposed, one-fifth actually supported imposing a state income tax for education.

Responses on school curriculum questions are especially intriguing. There was no clear-cut preference for "basic" or "optional" schooling; most wanted the best of both. And, when queried about which of nineteen skills should be taught at home and which at school, an overwhelming majority thought school and home shared this responsibility fifty-fifty. Such a response points out the need for increased communication between educators and parents.

An exception to agreement was noticed, however. Over 70% of the respondents thought "good manners" and "honesty and integrity" were the province of the home and that school should be mainly responsible for the "three R's" and the use of computers.

In an interesting side note, most respondents were supportive of teaching a foreign language before grade three.

To make sure that they get what they pay for, residents strongly favored the periodic testing of teachers and schools for quality; fewer supported testing children.

With the increased funding, most residents (79%) want to see class size reduced. Families with young children favor adding preschool to the public program, while those with single parents and young children want day care available at school before and after classes. However, the survey showed that most K through seventh grade students have someone waiting for them when they get home from school.

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Most people in our study, many of whom are not parents, were actively engaged in interaction with children. In the previous three months the majority of respondents (or their partners) had played with a child (79%), sat down to answer a child's question (72%), read to a child (67%), engaged in sports activities with a child (59%), taken a child to a movie, concert, or play (55%), attended a school play, game, or party (52%), or attended or held a birthday party for a child (51%).

Most parents (80%) want their children to attend college immediately after high school. It is interesting to note that female respondents were more likely to have college aspirations for their female children than for their male children.

Mail-out surveys tend to be completed by the female in a mixed household unless directions specify otherwise. This survey canvassed households, not individuals. The sex of the respondent not being a variable, more respondents were female than male.

Since households received the survey during spring break, answers to such items as "the number of meals eaten together as a family" and "hours spent watching television" may be skewed.

Certain questions elicit what are thought to be socially desirable responses, the "expected" answer. Questions from our study on the following topics fall into this category:

* television viewing,
* reporting academic grades,
* frequency of parent/teacher contact, and
* parents' plans to work for credentials.

Qualitative Research with "Hard-to-Reach" Residents

These Anchorage residents placed high value on education, and considered good education as the key to getting a job and having a happy life. They expressed a strong desire for education in areas which would enable them to contribute to the Anchorage community and to succeed in providing for themselves and their families.

Almost no one expressed hopelessness with the current system. But high levels of frustration, hurt, resentment and determination surrounding the difficulties in accessing good education were universal. Ethnic and racial minorities expressed extreme problems due to racism and discrimination perpetuated by students, teachers and administrators, and employers. Culture shock was rampant among those who moved to Alaska from the Outside as well as by those who moved within the state -- from village to city life. Those who did not speak English had to deal with name-calling and assumptions that they were stupid because they could not speak English (especially Asians and Hispanics).

Many residents emphasized that inaccurate, derogatory and unrepresentative stereotyping of ethnic, racial and social minorities (such as Native Americans, homosexuals, poor people and the disabled) in standard textbooks and curricula must be recognized and corrected. Some of the observations included: "They think we are savage wildmen," "They think we are bandits and drug dealers," "Why aren't any of my distinguished ancestors in the history books?," and "They don't know anything about us and they don't care to learn or to let us learn either." "Many parents don't want their children exposed to or associating with that kind of person."

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The need for including positive role models for minority children in the curricula and the classroom was often and enthusiastically emphasized. Many residents urged hiring minority teachers and aides such as elders who have special cultural knowledge of Alaska Native languages and have traditional outdoor skills from which all students could benefit. It was often noted that teachers of multicultural backgrounds are better able to deal with multicultural students because "they know both ways while white teachers only know one."

Most residents pinpointed the necessity of fostering self-esteem in students if they are to succeed. Parents often expressed the need for supportive, caring teachers who are equally interested in helping each student, no matter what their problems or differences. Many minority residents thought that teachers should make more effort to keep parents informed of their children' problems - more outreach to the parents. Residents felt that the biggest problem in the Anchorage schools was the teacher-student ratio.

Fierce resentment was expressed at slow-tracking minority students and automatic assignments of students with foreign surnames to bilingual courses. Many parents noted that decisions were being made about their children or themselves based on false assumptions or low expectations due to cultural or racial discrimination. Demands were expressed for testing of all students for special needs and possible qualification for gifted programs. Demands were also voiced for facilities in low-income neighborhoods to be of the same quality as those offered in higher income areas like south Anchorage.

These residents thought that stricter standards and discipline are needed in Anchorage schools. Most were appalled by the "common practice" of passing students on to new grades or levels, or moving ahead with lessons when previously taught ones were not mastered. Almost all parents expressed the need for tutors in basic subjects, and hoped that efforts could be made to help students when they first experience difficulty keeping-up, rather than when they are hopelessly behind.

Many low-income parents cannot access education because of difficulties in obtaining child care and transportation. To access education themselves, or to attend meetings or events pertaining to their children's educations, most parents reported needing affordable child care. Many also need transportation. Parents often noted the need for transportation after school (for academics rather than sports) so that students could attend tutoring sessions. In addition to providing transportation, they hoped that after-school activities could be less expensive so that all children could afford to participate.

A common need expressed by low-income and minority residents was to obtain education in basic life skills - such as learning to speak the English language, reading, writing and arithmetic, to find, apply for, and get the skills to get a job, and to learn practical matters such as personal finances and budgeting, taking the bus or driving and maintaining a car. Many residents thought that computer training was the answer to getting a job and having a bright future. Other practical fields that residents want to study include electrical, machinery, communications and technology. The need for more computers, and science and technical labs in Anchorage schools was often expressed.

English as a Second Language and bilingual education courses are desperately needed by ethnic minority residents. Asians and Hispanics need English, while many Alaska Natives would like to study Native languages. The lack of availability of "relevant" foreign languages was noted by all residents.

Many minority parents stated that UAA is too bureaucratic, academic and impractical for them - "The community college system was better." Many stated a need for "study now - pay later" programs. Some noted that if they accept student loans, they lose their public assistance - "Adult education just costs too much, but if I could take a course or two I could get a good job and get off welfare!"

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Almost all ethnic residents stated that special cultural and learning-problem programs including SAVE, Johnson O'Malley (JOM), Indian Education, and Bilingual were crucially important to their children. Some stated the need for more cultural identity awareness programs and ones with depth - not "just food and clothing."

Residents thought that moral and spiritual education is needed in the school and work place, as well as the teaching of multicultural awareness. They also wanted education in sexually transmitted diseases, domestic violence and substance abuse. Many residents were enthusiastic about training programs offered by their employers. They also noted the value of internships and practical experience being offered to students - especially when they lead to jobs.

Most expressed the opinion that too much money goes to school administrators and not enough goes to teachers. Agreement was near unanimous that "productivity must be rewarded and good teachers should be paid well." "Bad ones must be fired," and "Get rid of tenure" were other comments often heard.

A strong theme expressed by all is that individuals of different cultures and social groups have unique talents, learning and teaching styles. With care and discipline, they all can contribute to greater educational productivity for everyone. Residents argued that the entire Anchorage population needs training to develop intercultural sensitivity and an appreciation of the special talents and unique contributions that diverse peoples can make.

The etymological meaning of the root word for "educate" (*educar*) is "to bring out, or develop, what is within." The stunning diversity currently within the Anchorage work force must be recognized now. The cogent and consistent testimony of these very diverse ethnic, racial, social and economic minority residents points clearly to the need for making intensive and systematic changes in the Anchorage education system -- on all levels of learning. Meeting the educational and training needs of these residents is a key step in developing the multicultural and international future of Anchorage.

E Pluribus Unum, "from diversity comes unity."[23]

Anchorage Teachers' Focus Group Research

On April 27, 1991, Craciun & Associates conducted focus group research for the Winning With Stronger Education (WISE) Project. Participants were teachers from the Anchorage School District, randomly selected from 306 teachers who volunteered after receiving a letter of invitation to participate.

The Anchorage Teachers' Focus Groups were conducted with several objectives in mind. The primary objective of this study was to determine teacher perceptions of and attitudes towards selected educational issues. Secondary objectives were (1) to determine what teachers consider the major deterrents to stronger education in Anchorage and (2) to determine the best way to assure teacher involvement in the tasks forces of the project.

Dual Cultures

A critical situation, showing up clearly in the focus group research, is the existence of dual cultures: teachers and bureaucracy. These opposing structures struggle for empowerment as teacher-professionals meet head-on the realities of bureaucratic politics and the self-sustaining duplicities which spring from them. Pressuring both of them is "the community," which consists now of a large number of disparate groups vying for attention.

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[23] Written on every dollar bill is this phrase.

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Teachers feel the need for much more support and respect if they are to be held responsible for the end product of education. They feel they are, by and large, professionals, who can get the job done if they are allowed to do so. But too many things are beyond the control of the teachers.

Recurring Themes

Insufficient or misallocated funding is, as teachers see it, the foremost problem facing education in Anchorage today. This includes, among other concerns, the funding for teacher salaries, for the implementation of smaller classes and the space to house them, for handling the disruptive students, and for dealing with the problems of the students from dysfunctional families.

Teachers believe the current spate of teacher-bashing by the general public nationwide is the result of a lack of understanding of the teacher's job, how the teacher actually handles time and how much of this time is expended throughout the year. They see the need for communicating more directly with the public.

Teachers admit there are those who should not be in teaching and are vocal about the problem and its solution, feeling that the universities and the certifying entities bear the brunt of the blame. Inadequately trained teachers should be weeded out in the selection process, preferably before they are graduated from Schools of Education.

Keeping up with developments so that they can best serve the students and the community is important to teachers. They want well-planned and productive in-service days. They question the adequacy of what they are getting. Perhaps better programs could be planned by the business community, possibly a forum where schools and employers could work together to analyze problems and help kids be better trained for the life they face.[29]

The Best Way to Involve Teachers in the Task Forces

May and early June are "push months" for educators, and they were unanimous in saying, "not before the end of school." In the second week of June, a Leadership Academy draws a lot of teachers so teachers prefer early- to mid-June for organizing the task forces. They want all teachers to be invited to participate. There is a consensus now that the project is important and the call to work during the summer months is not now a problem: "You will get those who are interested nearly any time." "Those who respond are active and interested."

Teachers want to choose the task force on which to work, perhaps noting two or three they would prefer. They like the idea of a letter inviting them to volunteer. However, the idea of a letter from the School District or from the Chamber of Commerce was not popular. "An invitation from the School District would be viewed with distrust." "Minimize the Chamber." A letter which indicates community involvement, possibly from a neutral third party, or a co-signed letter, was suggested.

The letter should give available choices with topical areas, and, if possible, times and dates.

Since the respondents felt that knowing the different community sectors involved in the study would increase the trust factor, they suggested listing below the logo the names and affiliations of those working on the study. "Community and long-term beliefs are more important than school administration support. They come and go, and we'll still be here."

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[29] Paraphrased from Alaska's Youth : Ready for Work, p.16. 3605 Arctic Blvd., # 770, Anchorage, Alaska 99503.

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Anchorage Residents'/Teachers' Agreement

Those who responded to the residential study and the teachers who volunteered for the focus groups show a remarkable consistency of agreement on the issues facing the educational system in Anchorage as it moves toward the 21st century.

Telephone Survey of Anchorage Businesses

The sample for the business telephone study was randomly selected from the 1991 ATU Yellow Pages' listing of businesses. Each industry in Alaska--excluding government--was sampled in proportion to its employment in Anchorage as defined by the Municipality of Anchorage *1989 Anchorage Indicators*.

The completed sample size of three hundred and seventy-five (n=375) ensures odds of nineteen out of twenty that if all Anchorage businesses were surveyed, the findings would differ from the following survey results by no more than 5.2 percentage points in either direction.

The research objectives of the study were:

- to ascertain what the business community sees as the weaknesses in its job applicants;
- to identify training and education provided by companies for new-hires and existing employees;
- to develop an understanding of the current and future educational and training needs of businesses; and
- to identify, for further study, those businesses currently involved in any cooperative program with the school system.

Employee Readiness for Work

Although most firms expected applicants to have general knowledge, some oral communication skills, and a basic level of enthusiasm, only slightly more than half (56%) expected applicants to have all the skills needed to perform a particular job, which suggests that further training is necessary.

Firms thought many applicants were most deficient in specific areas:

- *Services, finance, insurance, real estate, mining and the gas and oil industries found applicants to be lacking in general knowledge.
- *Mining and the gas and oil industries found applicants lacking the ability to express themselves orally.
- *Trade and services found potential employees lacking enthusiasm.
- *Larger firms (100+ employees) saw deficiencies in general knowledge, oral expression and the needed level of enthusiasm.
- *Firms with eleven to twenty-five employees had trouble locating applicants with the unique skills required in their businesses.

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Four out of nine firms with more than one employee (44%) contended that it had been more difficult now to find qualified employees than in the previous five years.

Offerings by Businesses in On-the-Job Training

About three-quarters of firms surveyed provide training to their new-hires and existing employees in specific skills for the job.

More than a quarter of the firms found it necessary to train new-hires because their product or service was unique or specialized. Another one-quarter claimed to offer new-hires training in motivation and problem solving skills.

Although "deficiencies in the specific skills of the job" was the leading concern for all industries when considering new-hires, it was not so great a concern for mining, oil, gas, manufacturing, and construction firms. In general, these companies are finding new-hires with the skills they require of new employees.

Finance, insurance, and real estate firms had the least problem with finding employees with the skills unique to their service or product. But almost half of the firms in the utility, communication, and transportation businesses found new-hires deficient in these unique skill areas.

Firms with twenty-six or more employees have a greater tendency to offer training to existing employees. As the size of the firm increases, the percentage of firms offering training increases.

The type of additional training given by firms to their employees is:

- *informal on-the-job training (96%),
- *seminars (66%),
- *formal classes (42%), and
- *on-site training by contracted vendors (26%).

Manufacturing and construction firms are the least likely to offer training of any type.

Cooperative Programs with Schools

Half of the firms surveyed have not participated in any of these programs. Those programs in which businesses most often participated were on-site business tours for students (thirty-seven companies); programs recruiting employees to lecture in classrooms (thirty-three companies), and Junior Achievement (twenty-seven companies).

At least half of the firms in (1) services, (2) finance, insurance, and real estate, and (3) utilities, communications, and transportation participate in some cooperative programs between the business community and the schools.

Non-profit organizations are twice as likely as profit-oriented firms to participate in some program which links the business community with the school system. The two factors which led the majority of firms to become involved with some school program related more to general community concerns than immediate to bottom-line payoffs. Two-thirds (69%) said they had "a desire to do something for the community." More than half of the companies involved wanted "to increase interest in the field among students." Slightly more than one-third related involvement in such programs to creating better entry-level workers.

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Appendix

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